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(54) Title: REGULATORS OF APOPTOSIS

(57) Abstract: The invention provides human apoptosis regulators (APRG) and polynucleotides which identify and encode APRG. The invention also provides expression vectors, host cells, antibodies, agonists, and antagonists. The invention also provides methods for diagnosing, treating, or preventing disorders associated with aberrant expression of APRG.

WO 01/92527 A2

REGULATORS OF APOPTOSIS

TECHNICAL FIELD

5 This invention relates to nucleic acid and amino acid sequences of apoptosis regulators and to the use of these sequences in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of cell proliferative, immunological, and reproductive disorders, and in the assessment of the effects of exogenous compounds on the expression of nucleic acid and amino acid sequences of apoptosis regulators.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 Tissue growth involves complex and ordered patterns of cell proliferation, cell differentiation, and regulated cell death (apoptosis). Cell proliferation and apoptosis are regulated to maintain both the number and the spatial organization of cells. This regulation depends on appropriate expression of proteins which control cell cycle progression in response to extracellular signals, such as growth factors
15 and other mitogens, and intracellular cues, such as DNA damage or nutrient starvation. Molecules which directly or indirectly modulate cell cycle progression fall into several categories, including growth factors and their receptors, second messenger and signal transduction proteins, oncogene products, tumor-suppressor proteins, and mitosis-promoting factors. Cancers are characterized by continuous or uncontrolled cell proliferation. Some cancers are associated with suppression of normal apoptotic cell
20 death.

Apoptosis is the genetically controlled process by which unneeded or defective cells undergo programmed cell death. Selective elimination of cells is as important for morphogenesis and tissue remodeling as is cell proliferation and differentiation. Lack of apoptosis may result in hyperplasia and other disorders associated with increased cell proliferation. Apoptosis is also a critical
25 component of the immune response. Immune cells such as cytotoxic T-cells and natural killer cells prevent the spread of disease by inducing apoptosis in tumor cells and virus-infected cells. In addition, immune cells that fail to distinguish self molecules from foreign molecules must be eliminated by apoptosis to avoid an autoimmune response.

Apoptotic cells undergo distinct morphological changes. Hallmarks of apoptosis include cell
30 shrinkage, nuclear and cytoplasmic condensation, and alterations in plasma membrane topology. Biochemically, apoptotic cells are characterized by increased intracellular calcium concentration, fragmentation of chromosomal DNA, and expression of novel cell surface components.

The molecular mechanisms of apoptosis are highly conserved, and many of the key protein regulators and effectors of apoptosis have been identified. Apoptosis generally proceeds in response

to a signal which is transduced intracellularly and results in altered patterns of gene expression and protein activity. Signaling molecules such as hormones and cytokines are known both to stimulate and to inhibit apoptosis through interactions with cell surface receptors.

Fragmentation of chromosomal DNA is one of the hallmarks of apoptosis. DNA
5 fragmentation factor (DFF) is a protein composed of two subunits, a 40-kDa, caspase-activated nuclease termed DFF40/CAD, and its 45-kDa inhibitor DFF45/ICAD. Two mouse homologs of DFF45/ICAD, termed CIDE-A and CIDE-B, have recently been described (Inohara, N. et al.(1998) EMBO J. 17:2526-2533). CIDE-A and CIDE-B expression in mammalian cells activated apoptosis, while expression of CIDE-A alone induced DNA fragmentation. In addition, FAS-mediated
10 apoptosis was enhanced by CIDE-A and CIDE-B, further implicating these proteins as effectors that mediate apoptosis.

Cancers are characterized by inappropriate cell proliferation, which may be due to uncontrolled cell growth or inadequate apoptosis. Strategies for treatment may involve either reestablishing control over cell cycle progression, or selectively stimulating apoptosis in cancerous
15 cells (Nigg, E.A. (1995) BioEssays 17:471-480). Response to mitogenic stresses is frequently controlled at the level of transcription and is coordinated by various transcription factors. For example, the Rel/NF-kappa B family of vertebrate transcription factors plays a pivotal role in inflammatory and immune responses to radiation. The NF-kappa B family includes p50, p52, RelA, RelB, cRel, and other DNA-binding proteins. The p52 protein induces apoptosis, upregulates the transcription factor c-
20 Jun, and activates c-Jun N-terminal kinase 1 (JNK1) (Sun, L. et al. (1998) Gene 208:157-166). Most NF-kappa B proteins form DNA-binding homodimers or heterodimers. Dimerization of many transcription factors is mediated by a conserved sequence known as the bZIP domain, characterized by a basic region followed by a leucine zipper.

The Fas/Apo-1 receptor (FAS) is a member of the tumor necrosis factor (TNF) receptor
25 family. Upon binding its ligand (Fas ligand), the membrane-spanning FAS induces apoptosis by recruiting several cytoplasmic proteins that transmit the death signal. One such protein, termed FAS-associated protein factor 1 (FAF1), was isolated from mice, and it was demonstrated that expression of FAF1 in L cells potentiated FAS-induced apoptosis (Chu, K. et al. (1995) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 92:11894-11898). Subsequently, FAS-associated factors have been isolated from numerous other
30 species, including quail and fly (Frohlich, T. et al. (1998) J. Cell Sci. 111:2353-2363). Another cytoplasmic protein that functions in the transmittal of the death signal from Fas is the Fas-associated death domain protein, also known as FADD. FADD transmits the death signal in both FAS-mediated and TNF receptor-mediated apoptotic pathways by activating caspase-8 (Bang, S. et al. (2000) J. Biol. Chem. 275:36217-36222).

Immunological defenses against cancer include induction of apoptosis in mutant cells by tumor suppressors, and the recognition of tumor antigens by T lymphocytes. Response to mitogenic stresses is frequently controlled at the level of transcription and is coordinated by various transcription factors. The Rel/NF-kappa B family of vertebrate transcription factors, for example, plays a pivotal role in inflammatory and immune responses to radiation. The NF-kappa B family includes p50, p52, RelA, RelB, and cRel and other DNA-binding proteins. The p52 protein induces apoptosis, upregulates transcription factor c-Jun, and activates c-Jun N-terminal kinase 1 (JNK1) (Sun, L. et al. (1998) Gene 208:157-166). Most NF-kappa B proteins form DNA-binding homodimers or heterodimers. Dimerization of many transcription factors is mediated by a conserved sequence known as the bZIP domain, characterised by a basic region followed by a leucine zipper.

Growth Factors and Signal Transduction Machinery

Growth factors are typically large, secreted polypeptides that act on cells in their local environment to promote cell proliferation. Growth factors bind to and activate specific cell surface receptors that initiate intracellular signal transduction cascades. Many growth factor receptors are classified as receptor tyrosine kinases that undergo autophosphorylation upon ligand binding. Autophosphorylation enables the receptor to interact with signal transduction proteins such as SH2 or SH3 (Src homology regions 2 or 3) domain-containing proteins. Other proteins that act downstream of growth factor receptors contain unique signaling domains such as the SPRY (Sp1a and ryanodine receptor) domain. (See, for example, Schultz, J. et al. (1998) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 95:5857-5864.) These proteins then modulate the activity state of small G-proteins, such as Ras, Rab, and Rho, along with GTPase activating proteins (GAPs), guanine nucleotide releasing proteins (GNRPs), and other guanine nucleotide exchange factors. Small G proteins act as molecular switches that turn on mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAP kinase) cascades. MAP kinase activates transcription of the early-response genes discussed below.

Most growth factors also have a multitude of other actions besides the regulation of cell growth and division: they can control the proliferation, survival, differentiation, migration, or function of cells depending on the circumstance. For example, epidermal growth factor (EGF) protects gastric mucosa against injury and accelerates ulcer healing by stimulating cell migration and proliferation. EGF binds the transmembrane protein tyrosine kinase EGF-R to trigger a series of events that results in activation of the Ras/Raf/MAP kinase pathway by the GTP-binding protein Ras. Other pathways potentially activated by EGF include the phosphatidylinositol pathway and the JAK/STAT signaling pathway (Tarnawski, A.S. et al. (1998) J. Clin. Gastroenterol. 27:S12-S20).

In addition to growth factors, small signaling peptides and hormones also influence cell proliferation. These molecules bind primarily to another class of receptor, the trimeric G-protein

coupled receptor (GPCR), found predominantly on the surface of immune, neuronal, and neuroendocrine cells. Upon ligand binding, the GPCR activates a trimeric G protein which in turn triggers increased levels of intracellular second messengers such as phospholipase C, Ca^{2+} , and cyclic AMP. Most GPCR-mediated signaling pathways indirectly promote cell proliferation by causing the secretion or breakdown of other signaling molecules that have direct mitogenic effects (Smith, A. et al. (1994) Cell 76:959-962).

Protein kinase C (PKC) plays a central role in the control of proliferation and differentiation of various cell types by mediating the signal transduction response to hormones and growth factors. The PKC family of serine/threonine kinases includes twelve different isoforms which have similar catalytic domains at their C-termini, but differ in their N-terminal regulatory domains. Since most cells express multiple PKC isoforms, the specificity of each enzyme for its substrate is achieved by targeting individual isoenzymes to a select location in the cell, either constitutively or upon cell stimulation. A variety of PKC-binding proteins and lipids have been identified that may function to compartmentalize PKC isoenzymes, including RACK1, serum deprivation response (sdr) protein, and SRBC (sdr-related gene product that binds C-kinase). Interestingly, both sdr and SRBC appear to provide localization of activated PKC to caveolae, but each has specificity for a different isoenzyme; sdr interacts specifically with $\text{PKC}\alpha$ and SRBC interacts with $\text{PKC}\delta$. Both sdr and SRBC are induced during stages of growth arrest, and were originally isolated from serum-deprived cultured cells. Thus, sdr and SRBC appear to be important for targeting activated PKC isoenzymes to subcellular signaling sites important in growth control. (Mineo, C. et al. (1998) J. Cell Biol. 141:601-610; and Izumi, Y. et al. (1997) J. Biol. Chem. 272:7381-7389.)

Oncogenes

Oncogenes (i.e. "cancer-causing genes") are involved in the reception and transduction of growth factor signals and in the modulation of gene expression in response to these signals. For example, stimulation of a cell by growth factor activates two sets of genes, the early-response genes and the delayed-response genes. Early-response gene products include myc, fos, and jun, all of which encode gene regulatory proteins. These regulatory proteins activate the transcription of the delayed-response genes which encode proteins directly involved in cell cycle progression, such as the cyclins and cyclin dependent kinase discussed below. Additional oncogene products which directly regulate gene expression include the Rel transcription factor, the Ret zinc finger protein, and the Tre oncoprotein. (See, for example, Cao, T. et al. (1998) J. Cell Sci. 111:1319-1329; and Nakamura, T. et al. (1992) Oncogene 7:733-741.) Some conserved regions of oncogenes have been identified, such as the C3HC4 RING finger motif. Mutations in the C3HC4 RING finger domain of the Bmi-1 oncoprotein, for example, block lymphoma induction in mice (Hemenway, C.S. (1998) Oncogene 16:2541-2547).

Apoptosis inhibition motifs have also been identified, such as the BIR repeat implicated in the activity of the IAP (Inhibitor of Apoptosis) family. Mutations or chromosomal translocations which result in hyperactivation of oncogenes result in uncontrolled cell proliferation.

Tumor Suppressors

5 Tumor suppressor genes are involved in inhibition of cell proliferation. Mutations which decrease the activity of tumor suppressor genes result in increased cell proliferation. In humans and other mammals, tumor suppressors include the retinoblastoma (Rb) and p53 proteins. Tumor suppressors have also been discovered in lower animals such as Drosophila, in which the Discs-Large (Dlg) and Hyperplastic Discs (Hyd) proteins inhibit hyperplasia of undifferentiated epithelial cells in
10 developing imaginal discs. (See, for example, Mansfield, E. et al. (1994) Dev. Biol. 165:507-526.) The importance of tumor suppressor genes and oncogenes in the development of cancer is demonstrated by the fact that about 75% of colorectal cancers have inactivating mutations in the p53 gene and about 50% have a hyper-activating mutation in a ras family oncogene.

Tumor suppressor genes often act as "gatekeepers" (Kinzler, K.W. and Vogelstein, B. (1996)
15 Cell 87:159-170). Normally, the gatekeeper is responsible for maintaining a balance of cell division, growth arrest, and death. External signals may activate or inactivate the gatekeeper, or alter its location within the cell. In some cases, inactivation of the gatekeeper is necessary for cell proliferation, and activation is necessary for cell growth arrest and differentiation. In other cases, the situation is reversed. Proteins which interact with the gatekeeper modify its activity or intracellular
20 location to provide the appropriate response to external signals at any stage in the cell's development.

An example of a gatekeeper protein is the adenomatous polyposis coli (APC) protein. Though APC is expressed ubiquitously, it appears to function as a gatekeeper in colorectal cells. Mutations in the APC protein are linked to familial and sporadic forms of colon cancer. All of these mutations involve truncations in the APC C-terminus, which serves as a binding site for several
25 proteins, including EB1, RP1, and the tumor suppressor protein Dlg. The interactions between APC and these binding proteins may be important for localizing or regulating APC activity. For example, EB1 appears to link APC to microtubules, and a defect in chromosome segregation has been implicated as an early event in colorectal tumorigenesis (Berreuta, L. (1998) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 95:10596-10601; and Renner, C. et al. (1997) J. Immunol. 159:1276-1283).

30 Another example of a gatekeeper is the E2F transcription factor, which can function either as a positive regulator of cell cycle progression or as a suppressor of cell proliferation, depending on the tissue. The balance of cell division over growth arrest and differentiation appears to involve proteins which interact with and modulate E2F. These proteins include the Rb tumor suppressor protein and NPDC-1 (neural proliferation, differentiation, and control). Rb acts to repress transcriptional activity

of E2F, leading to differentiation or apoptosis in the responding cell. NPDC-1 is a neural specific gene expressed in growth arrested and differentiated cells. The NPDC-1 gene product, npdcf-1, interacts with E2F to down-regulate cell proliferation (Dupont, E. et al. (1998) J. Neurosci. Res. 51:257-267).

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Cell Cycle Machinery

The molecular machinery which drives the cell cycle in response to mitogens and growth factors has been extensively studied in model systems such as budding yeast, fission yeast, and the African clawed frog, Xenopus. Essentially, the cell cycle is comprised of four successive phases: G1, S (DNA synthesis), G2, and M (mitosis). Cells which exit the cell cycle enter a quiescent phase called G0. Studies in yeast have shown that exit from S and M phases is driven by the anaphase-promoting complex, an assembly of proteins that degrades cyclins via the ubiquitin-mediated protein degradation pathway. (See, for example, Kominami, K. et al. (1998) EMBO J. 17:5388-5399.) Other non-kinase proteins, such as the Zer1p RNA splicing protein in fission yeast, are important for exit of the cell from G0 and entry into G1 or G2. (See, for example, Urushiyama, S. et al. (1997) Genetics 147:101-115.)

Several cell cycle transitions, including the entry and exit of a cell from mitosis, are dependent upon the activation and inhibition of cyclin-dependent kinases (Cdks). The Cdks are composed of a kinase subunit, Cdk, and an activating subunit, cyclin, in a complex that is subject to many levels of regulation. Cyclins bind and activate cyclin-dependent protein kinases which then phosphorylate and activate selected proteins involved in the mitotic process. The Cdk-cyclin complex is both activated and inhibited by phosphorylation. In addition, the Cdk-cyclin complex is regulated by targeted degradation involving molecules such as CDC4 and CDC53. Other proteins mediate entry into or progression through mitosis. For example, Berry and Gould recently identified a novel, 142 amino acid protein from the yeast S. pombe, termed dmp1p, that is required for proper spindle formation and entry into mitosis, but does not interact with cyclin-type proteins (Berry L.D. and Gould K.L. (1997) J. Cell Biol. 137:1337-1354). Dim1p appears to be evolutionarily conserved, since a human homolog has recently been described (Larin D., et al. (1997) GI 2565275).

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Apoptosis Machinery

The Bcl-2 family of proteins, as well as other cytoplasmic proteins, are key regulators of apoptosis. There are at least 15 Bcl-2 family members within 3 subfamilies. These proteins have been identified in mammalian cells and in viruses, and each possesses at least one of four Bcl-2 homology domains (BH1 to BH4), which are highly conserved. Bcl-2 family proteins contain the BH1 and BH2 domains, which are found in members of the pro-survival subfamily, while those proteins which are most similar to Bcl-2 have all four conserved domains, enabling inhibition of apoptosis following

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encounters with a variety of cytotoxic challenges. Members of the pro-survival subfamily include Bcl-2, Bcl-x_L, Bcl-w, Mcl-1, and A1 in mammals; NF-13 (chicken); CED-9 (Caenorhabditis elegans); and viral proteins BHRF1, LMW5-HL, ORF16, KS-Bcl-2, and E1B-19K. The BH3 domain is essential for the function of pro-apoptosis subfamily proteins. The two pro-apoptosis subfamilies, Bax and

5 BH3, include Bax, Bak, and Bok (also called Mtd); and Bik, Blk, Hrk, BNIP3, Bim_L, Bad, Bid, and Egl-1 (C. elegans); respectively. Members of the Bax subfamily contain the BH1, BH2, and BH3 domains, and resemble Bcl-2 rather closely. In contrast, members of the BH3 subfamily have only the 9-16 residue BH3 domain, being otherwise unrelated to any known protein, and only Bik and Blk share sequence similarity. The proteins of the two pro-apoptosis subfamilies may be the antagonists of pro-

10 survival subfamily proteins. This is illustrated in C. elegans where Egl-1, which is required for apoptosis, binds to and acts via CED-9 (for review, see Adams, J.M. and S. Cory (1998) Science 281:1322-1326).

Heterodimerization between pro-apoptosis and anti-apoptosis subfamily proteins seems to have a titrating effect on the functions of these protein subfamilies, which suggests that relative

15 concentrations of the members of each subfamily may act to regulate apoptosis. Heterodimerization is not required for a pro-survival protein; however, it is essential in the BH3 subfamily, and less so in the Bax subfamily.

The Bcl-2 protein has 2 isoforms, alpha and beta, which are formed by alternative splicing. It forms homodimers and heterodimers with Bax and Bak proteins and the Bcl-X isoform Bcl-x_S.

20 Heterodimerization with Bax requires intact BH1 and BH2 domains, and is necessary for pro-survival activity. The BH4 domain seems to be involved in pro-survival activity as well. Bcl-2 is located within the inner and outer mitochondrial membranes, as well as within the nuclear envelope and endoplasmic reticulum, and is expressed in a variety of tissues. Its involvement in follicular lymphoma (type II chronic lymphatic leukemia) is seen in a chromosomal translocation T(14;18) (q32;q21) and involves

25 immunoglobulin gene regions.

The Bcl-x protein is a dominant regulator of apoptotic cell death. Alternative splicing results in three isoforms, Bcl-xB, a long isoform, and a short isoform. The long isoform exhibits cell death repressor activity, while the short isoform promotes apoptosis. Bcl-xL forms heterodimers with Bax and Bak, although heterodimerization with Bax does not seem to be necessary for pro-survival (anti-

30 apoptosis) activity. Bcl-xS forms heterodimers with Bcl-2. Bcl-x is found in mitochondrial membranes and the perinuclear envelope. Bcl-xS is expressed at high levels in developing lymphocytes and other cells undergoing a high rate of turnover. Bcl-xL is found in adult brain and in other tissues' long-lived post-mitotic cells. As with Bcl-2, the BH1, BH2, and BH4 domains are involved in pro-survival activity.

The Bcl-w protein is found within the cytoplasm of almost all myeloid cell lines and in numerous tissues, with the highest levels of expression in brain, colon, and salivary gland. This protein is expressed in low levels in testis, liver, heart, stomach, skeletal muscle, and placenta, and a few lymphoid cell lines. Bcl-w contains the BH1, BH2, and BH4 domains, all of which are needed for its cell survival promotion activity. Although mice in which Bcl-w gene function was disrupted by homologous recombination were viable, healthy, and normal in appearance, and adult females had normal reproductive function, the adult males were infertile. In these males, the initial, prepuberty stage of spermatogenesis was largely unaffected and the testes developed normally. However, the seminiferous tubules were disorganized, contained numerous apoptotic cells, and were incapable of producing mature sperm. This mouse model may be applicable to some cases of human male sterility and suggests that alteration of programmed cell death in the testes may be useful in modulating fertility (Print, C.G. et al. (1998) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 95:12424-12431).

Studies in rat ischemic brain found Bcl-w to be overexpressed relative to its normal low constitutive level of expression in nonischemic brain. Furthermore, *in vitro* studies to examine the mechanism of action of Bcl-w revealed that isolated rat brain mitochondria were unable to respond to an addition of recombinant Bax or high concentrations of calcium when Bcl-w was also present. The normal response would be the release of cytochrome c from the mitochondria. Additionally, recombinant Bcl-w protein was found to inhibit calcium-induced loss of mitochondrial transmembrane potential, which is indicative of permeability transition. Together these findings suggest that Bcl-w may be a neuro-protectant against ischemic neuronal death and may achieve this protection via the mitochondrial death-regulatory pathway (Yan, C. et al. (2000) J. Cereb. Blood Flow Metab. 20:620-630).

The bfl-1 gene is an additional member of the Bcl-2 family, and is also a suppressor of apoptosis. The Bfl-1 protein has 175 amino acids, and contains the BH1, BH2, and BH3 conserved domains found in Bcl-2 family members. It also contains a Gln-rich NH2-terminal region and lacks an NH domain 1, unlike other Bcl-2 family members. The mouse A1 protein shares high sequence homology with Bfl-1 and has the 3 conserved domains found in Bfl-1. Apoptosis induced by the p53 tumor suppressor protein is suppressed by Bfl-1, similar to the action of Bcl-2, Bcl-xL, and EBV-BHRF1 (D'Sa-Eipper, C. et al. (1996) Cancer Res. 56:3879-3882). Bfl-1 is found intracellularly, with the highest expression in the hematopoietic compartment, i.e. blood, spleen, and bone marrow; moderate expression in lung, small intestine, and testis; and minimal expression in other tissues. It is also found in vascular smooth muscle cells and hematopoietic malignancies. A correlation has been noted between the expression level of bfl-1 and the development of stomach cancer, suggesting that the Bfl-1 protein is involved in the development of stomach cancer, either in the promotion of cancerous cell survival or in

cancer (Choi, S.S. et al. (1995) *Oncogene* 11:1693-1698).

Transcription factors play an important role in the onset of apoptosis. A number of downstream effector molecules, particularly proteases such as the cysteine proteases called caspases, are involved in the initiation and execution phases of apoptosis. The activation of the caspases results from the competitive action of the pro-survival and pro-apoptosis Bcl-2-related proteins (Print, C.G. et al. (1998) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 95:12424-12431). A pro-apoptotic signal can activate initiator caspases that trigger a proteolytic caspase cascade, leading to the hydrolysis of target proteins and the classic apoptotic death of the cell. Two active site residues, a cysteine and a histidine, have been implicated in the catalytic mechanism. Caspases are among the most specific endopeptidases, cleaving after aspartate residues.

Caspases are synthesized as inactive zymogens consisting of one large (p20) and one small (p10) subunit separated by a small spacer region, and a variable N-terminal prodomain. This prodomain interacts with cofactors that can positively or negatively affect apoptosis. An activating signal causes autoproteolytic cleavage of a specific aspartate residue (D297 in the caspase-1 numbering convention) and removal of the spacer and prodomain, leaving a p10/p20 heterodimer. Two of these heterodimers interact via their small subunits to form the catalytically active tetramer. The long prodomains of some caspase family members have been shown to promote dimerization and auto-processing of procaspases. Some caspases contain a "death effector domain" in their prodomain by which they can be recruited into self-activating complexes with other caspases and FADD protein-associated death receptors or the TNF receptor complex. In addition, two dimers from different caspase family members can associate, changing the substrate specificity of the resultant tetramer. A caspase recruitment domain (CARD) is found within the prodomain of several apical caspases and is conserved in several apoptosis regulatory molecules such as Apaf-2, RAIDD, and cellular inhibitors of apoptosis proteins (IAPs) (Hofmann, K. et al. (1997) *Trends Biochem. Sci.* 22:155-157). The regulatory role of CARD in apoptosis may be to allow proteins such as Apaf-1 to associate with caspase-9 (Li, P. et al. (1997) *Cell* 91:479-489). A human cDNA encoding an apoptosis repressor with a CARD (ARC) which is expressed in both skeletal and cardiac muscle has been identified and characterized. ARC functions as an inhibitor of apoptosis and interacts selectively with caspases (Koseki, T. et al. (1998) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 95:5156-5160). All of these interactions have clear effects on the control of apoptosis (reviewed in Chan S.L. and M.P. Mattson (1999) *J. Neurosci. Res.* 58:167-190; Salveson, G.S. and V.M. Dixit (1999) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 96:10964-10967).

The discovery of new apoptosis regulators and the polynucleotides encoding them satisfies a need in the art by providing new compositions which are useful in the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of cell proliferative, immunological, and reproductive disorders, and in the assessment of the

effects of exogenous compounds on the expression of nucleic acid and amino acid sequences of apoptosis regulators.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The invention features purified polypeptides, apoptosis regulators, referred to collectively as “APRG” and individually as “APRG-1,” “APRG-2,” and “APRG-3.” In one aspect, the invention provides an isolated polypeptide selected from the group consisting of a) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, b) a naturally occurring polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to an amino acid sequence
10 selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, c) a biologically active fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, and d) an immunogenic fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3. In one alternative, the invention provides an isolated polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1-3.

15 The invention further provides an isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of a) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, b) a naturally occurring polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, c) a biologically active fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the
20 group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, and d) an immunogenic fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3. In one alternative, the polynucleotide encodes a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3. In another alternative, the polynucleotide is selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6.

 Additionally, the invention provides a recombinant polynucleotide comprising a promoter
25 sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of a) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, b) a naturally occurring polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, c) a biologically active fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of
30 SEQ ID NO:1-3, and d) an immunogenic fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3. In one alternative, the invention provides a cell transformed with the recombinant polynucleotide. In another alternative, the invention provides a transgenic organism comprising the recombinant polynucleotide.

 The invention also provides a method for producing a polypeptide selected from the group

consisting of a) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, b) a naturally occurring polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, c) a biologically active fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, and d) an immunogenic fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3. The method comprises a) culturing a cell under conditions suitable for expression of the polypeptide, wherein said cell is transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide comprising a promoter sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide encoding the polypeptide, and b) recovering the polypeptide so expressed.

10 Additionally, the invention provides an isolated antibody which specifically binds to a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of a) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, b) a naturally occurring polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, c) a biologically active fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, and d) an immunogenic fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3.

15 The invention further provides an isolated polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of a) a polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6, b) a naturally occurring polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence at least 90% identical to a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6, c) a polynucleotide complementary to the polynucleotide of a), d) a polynucleotide complementary to the polynucleotide of b), and e) an RNA equivalent of a)-d). In one alternative, the polynucleotide comprises at least 60 contiguous nucleotides.

20 Additionally, the invention provides a method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of a) a polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6, b) a naturally occurring polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence at least 90% identical to a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6, c) a polynucleotide complementary to the polynucleotide of a), d) a polynucleotide complementary to the polynucleotide of b), and e) an RNA equivalent of a)-d). The method comprises a) hybridizing the sample with a probe comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides comprising a sequence complementary to said target polynucleotide in the sample, and which probe specifically hybridizes to said target polynucleotide, under conditions whereby a hybridization complex is formed between said probe and said target polynucleotide or fragments thereof, and b) detecting the presence or absence of

said hybridization complex, and optionally, if present, the amount thereof. In one alternative, the probe comprises at least 60 contiguous nucleotides.

The invention further provides a method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of a) a polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6, b) a naturally occurring polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence at least 90% identical to a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6, c) a polynucleotide complementary to the polynucleotide of a), d) a polynucleotide complementary to the polynucleotide of b), and e) an RNA equivalent of a)-d). The method comprises a) amplifying said target polynucleotide or fragment thereof using polymerase chain reaction amplification, and b) detecting the presence or absence of said amplified target polynucleotide or fragment thereof, and, optionally, if present, the amount thereof.

The invention further provides a composition comprising an effective amount of a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of a) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, b) a naturally occurring polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, c) a biologically active fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, and d) an immunogenic fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient. In one embodiment, the composition comprises an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3. The invention additionally provides a method of treating a disease or condition associated with decreased expression of functional APRG, comprising administering to a patient in need of such treatment the composition.

The invention also provides a method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an agonist of a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of a) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, b) a naturally occurring polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, c) a biologically active fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, and d) an immunogenic fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3. The method comprises a) exposing a sample comprising the polypeptide to a compound, and b) detecting agonist activity in the sample. In one alternative, the invention provides a composition comprising an agonist compound identified by the method and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient. In another alternative, the invention provides a method of

treating a disease or condition associated with decreased expression of functional APRG, comprising administering to a patient in need of such treatment the composition.

Additionally, the invention provides a method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an antagonist of a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of a) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, b) a naturally occurring polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, c) a biologically active fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, and d) an immunogenic fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3. The method comprises a) exposing a sample comprising the polypeptide to a compound, and b) detecting antagonist activity in the sample. In one alternative, the invention provides a composition comprising an antagonist compound identified by the method and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient. In another alternative, the invention provides a method of treating a disease or condition associated with overexpression of functional APRG, comprising administering to a patient in need of such treatment the composition.

The invention further provides a method of screening for a compound that specifically binds to a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of a) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, b) a naturally occurring polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, c) a biologically active fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, and d) an immunogenic fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3. The method comprises a) combining the polypeptide with at least one test compound under suitable conditions, and b) detecting binding of the polypeptide to the test compound, thereby identifying a compound that specifically binds to the polypeptide.

The invention further provides a method of screening for a compound that modulates the activity of a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of a) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, b) a naturally occurring polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, c) a biologically active fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, and d) an immunogenic fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3. The method comprises a) combining the polypeptide with at least one test compound under conditions permissive for the activity of the polypeptide, b) assessing the

activity of the polypeptide in the presence of the test compound, and c) comparing the activity of the polypeptide in the presence of the test compound with the activity of the polypeptide in the absence of the test compound, wherein a change in the activity of the polypeptide in the presence of the test compound is indicative of a compound that modulates the activity of the polypeptide.

- 5 The invention further provides a method for screening a compound for effectiveness in altering expression of a target polynucleotide, wherein said target polynucleotide comprises a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6, the method comprising a) exposing a sample comprising the target polynucleotide to a compound, and b) detecting altered expression of the target polynucleotide.
- 10 The invention further provides a method for assessing toxicity of a test compound, said method comprising a) treating a biological sample containing nucleic acids with the test compound; b) hybridizing the nucleic acids of the treated biological sample with a probe comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides of a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of i) a polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6, ii) a
- 15 naturally occurring polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence at least 90% identical to a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6, iii) a polynucleotide having a sequence complementary to i), iv) a polynucleotide complementary to the polynucleotide of ii), and v) an RNA equivalent of i)-iv). Hybridization occurs under conditions whereby a specific hybridization complex is formed between said probe and a target polynucleotide in the biological
- 20 sample, said target polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of i) a polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6, ii) a naturally occurring polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence at least 90% identical to a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6, iii) a polynucleotide complementary to the polynucleotide of i), iv) a polynucleotide complementary to the polynucleotide
- 25 of ii), and v) an RNA equivalent of i)-iv). Alternatively, the target polynucleotide comprises a fragment of a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of i)-v) above; c) quantifying the amount of hybridization complex; and d) comparing the amount of hybridization complex in the treated biological sample with the amount of hybridization complex in an untreated biological sample, wherein a difference in the amount of hybridization complex in the treated
- 30 biological sample is indicative of toxicity of the test compound.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE TABLES

Table 1 summarizes the nomenclature for the full length polynucleotide and polypeptide sequences of the present invention.

- 35 Table 2 shows the GenBank identification number and annotation of the nearest GenBank

homolog for polypeptides of the invention. The probability score for the match between each polypeptide and its GenBank homolog is also shown.

Table 3 shows structural features of polypeptide sequences of the invention, including predicted motifs and domains, along with the methods, algorithms, and searchable databases used for analysis of the polypeptides.

Table 4 lists the cDNA and/or genomic DNA fragments which were used to assemble polynucleotide sequences of the invention, along with selected fragments of the polynucleotide sequences.

Table 5 shows the representative cDNA library for polynucleotides of the invention.

Table 6 provides an appendix which describes the tissues and vectors used for construction of the cDNA libraries shown in Table 5.

Table 7 shows the tools, programs, and algorithms used to analyze the polynucleotides and polypeptides of the invention, along with applicable descriptions, references, and threshold parameters.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Before the present proteins, nucleotide sequences, and methods are described, it is understood that this invention is not limited to the particular machines, materials and methods described, as these may vary. It is also to be understood that the terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only, and is not intended to limit the scope of the present invention which will be limited only by the appended claims.

It must be noted that as used herein and in the appended claims, the singular forms "a," "an," and "the" include plural reference unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. Thus, for example, a reference to "a host cell" includes a plurality of such host cells, and a reference to "an antibody" is a reference to one or more antibodies and equivalents thereof known to those skilled in the art, and so forth.

Unless defined otherwise, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meanings as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. Although any machines, materials, and methods similar or equivalent to those described herein can be used to practice or test the present invention, the preferred machines, materials and methods are now described.

All publications mentioned herein are cited for the purpose of describing and disclosing the cell lines, protocols, reagents and vectors which are reported in the publications and which might be used in connection with the invention. Nothing herein is to be construed as an admission that the invention is not entitled to antedate such disclosure by virtue of prior invention.

DEFINITIONS

“APRG” refers to the amino acid sequences of substantially purified APRG obtained from any species, particularly a mammalian species, including bovine, ovine, porcine, murine, equine, and human, and from any source, whether natural, synthetic, semi-synthetic, or recombinant.

5 The term “agonist” refers to a molecule which intensifies or mimics the biological activity of APRG. Agonists may include proteins, nucleic acids, carbohydrates, small molecules, or any other compound or composition which modulates the activity of APRG either by directly interacting with APRG or by acting on components of the biological pathway in which APRG participates.

 An “allelic variant” is an alternative form of the gene encoding APRG. Allelic variants may
10 result from at least one mutation in the nucleic acid sequence and may result in altered mRNAs or in polypeptides whose structure or function may or may not be altered. A gene may have none, one, or many allelic variants of its naturally occurring form. Common mutational changes which give rise to allelic variants are generally ascribed to natural deletions, additions, or substitutions of nucleotides. Each of these types of changes may occur alone, or in combination with the others, one or more times in
15 a given sequence.

 “Altered” nucleic acid sequences encoding APRG include those sequences with deletions, insertions, or substitutions of different nucleotides, resulting in a polypeptide the same as APRG or a polypeptide with at least one functional characteristic of APRG. Included within this definition are polymorphisms which may or may not be readily detectable using a particular oligonucleotide probe of
20 the polynucleotide encoding APRG, and improper or unexpected hybridization to allelic variants, with a locus other than the normal chromosomal locus for the polynucleotide sequence encoding APRG. The encoded protein may also be “altered,” and may contain deletions, insertions, or substitutions of amino acid residues which produce a silent change and result in a functionally equivalent APRG. Deliberate amino acid substitutions may be made on the basis of similarity in polarity, charge, solubility,
25 hydrophobicity, hydrophilicity, and/or the amphipathic nature of the residues, as long as the biological or immunological activity of APRG is retained. For example, negatively charged amino acids may include aspartic acid and glutamic acid, and positively charged amino acids may include lysine and arginine. Amino acids with uncharged polar side chains having similar hydrophilicity values may include: asparagine and glutamine; and serine and threonine. Amino acids with uncharged side chains
30 having similar hydrophilicity values may include: leucine, isoleucine, and valine; glycine and alanine; and phenylalanine and tyrosine.

 The terms “amino acid” and “amino acid sequence” refer to an oligopeptide, peptide, polypeptide, or protein sequence, or a fragment of any of these, and to naturally occurring or synthetic molecules. Where “amino acid sequence” is recited to refer to a sequence of a naturally occurring

protein molecule, "amino acid sequence" and like terms are not meant to limit the amino acid sequence to the complete native amino acid sequence associated with the recited protein molecule.

"Amplification" relates to the production of additional copies of a nucleic acid sequence.

Amplification is generally carried out using polymerase chain reaction (PCR) technologies well known
5 in the art.

The term "antagonist" refers to a molecule which inhibits or attenuates the biological activity of APRG. Antagonists may include proteins such as antibodies, nucleic acids, carbohydrates, small molecules, or any other compound or composition which modulates the activity of APRG either by directly interacting with APRG or by acting on components of the biological pathway in which APRG
10 participates.

The term "antibody" refers to intact immunoglobulin molecules as well as to fragments thereof, such as Fab, F(ab')₂, and Fv fragments, which are capable of binding an epitopic determinant. Antibodies that bind APRG polypeptides can be prepared using intact polypeptides or using fragments containing small peptides of interest as the immunizing antigen. The polypeptide or oligopeptide used
15 to immunize an animal (e.g., a mouse, a rat, or a rabbit) can be derived from the translation of RNA, or synthesized chemically, and can be conjugated to a carrier protein if desired. Commonly used carriers that are chemically coupled to peptides include bovine serum albumin, thyroglobulin, and keyhole limpet hemocyanin (KLH). The coupled peptide is then used to immunize the animal.

The term "antigenic determinant" refers to that region of a molecule (i.e., an epitope) that
20 makes contact with a particular antibody. When a protein or a fragment of a protein is used to immunize a host animal, numerous regions of the protein may induce the production of antibodies which bind specifically to antigenic determinants (particular regions or three-dimensional structures on the protein). An antigenic determinant may compete with the intact antigen (i.e., the immunogen used to elicit the immune response) for binding to an antibody.

25 The term "antisense" refers to any composition capable of base-pairing with the "sense" (coding) strand of a specific nucleic acid sequence. Antisense compositions may include DNA; RNA; peptide nucleic acid (PNA); oligonucleotides having modified backbone linkages such as phosphorothioates, methylphosphonates, or benzylphosphonates; oligonucleotides having modified sugar groups such as 2'-methoxyethyl sugars or 2'-methoxyethoxy sugars; or oligonucleotides having
30 modified bases such as 5-methyl cytosine, 2'-deoxyuracil, or 7-deaza-2'-deoxyguanosine. Antisense molecules may be produced by any method including chemical synthesis or transcription. Once introduced into a cell, the complementary antisense molecule base-pairs with a naturally occurring nucleic acid sequence produced by the cell to form duplexes which block either transcription or translation. The designation "negative" or "minus" can refer to the antisense strand, and the

designation “positive” or “plus” can refer to the sense strand of a reference DNA molecule.

The term “biologically active” refers to a protein having structural, regulatory, or biochemical functions of a naturally occurring molecule. Likewise, “immunologically active” or “immunogenic” refers to the capability of the natural, recombinant, or synthetic APRG, or of any oligopeptide thereof, to induce a specific immune response in appropriate animals or cells and to bind with specific antibodies.

“Complementary” describes the relationship between two single-stranded nucleic acid sequences that anneal by base-pairing. For example, 5'-AGT-3' pairs with its complement, 3'-TCA-5'.

A “composition comprising a given polynucleotide sequence” and a “composition comprising a given amino acid sequence” refer broadly to any composition containing the given polynucleotide or amino acid sequence. The composition may comprise a dry formulation or an aqueous solution. Compositions comprising polynucleotide sequences encoding APRG or fragments of APRG may be employed as hybridization probes. The probes may be stored in freeze-dried form and may be associated with a stabilizing agent such as a carbohydrate. In hybridizations, the probe may be deployed in an aqueous solution containing salts (e.g., NaCl), detergents (e.g., sodium dodecyl sulfate; SDS), and other components (e.g., Denhardt's solution, dry milk, salmon sperm DNA, etc.).

“Consensus sequence” refers to a nucleic acid sequence which has been subjected to repeated DNA sequence analysis to resolve uncalled bases, extended using the XL-PCR kit (Applied Biosystems, Foster City CA) in the 5' and/or the 3' direction, and resequenced, or which has been assembled from one or more overlapping cDNA, EST, or genomic DNA fragments using a computer program for fragment assembly, such as the GELVIEW fragment assembly system (GCG, Madison WI) or Phrap (University of Washington, Seattle WA). Some sequences have been both extended and assembled to produce the consensus sequence.

“Conservative amino acid substitutions” are those substitutions that are predicted to least interfere with the properties of the original protein, i.e., the structure and especially the function of the protein is conserved and not significantly changed by such substitutions. The table below shows amino acids which may be substituted for an original amino acid in a protein and which are regarded as conservative amino acid substitutions.

| | Original Residue | Conservative Substitution |
|--|------------------|---------------------------|
| | Ala | Gly, Ser |
| | Arg | His, Lys |
| | Asn | Asp, Gln, His |
| | Asp | Asn, Glu |
| | Cys | Ala, Ser |
| | Gln | Asn, Glu, His |

| | | |
|----|-----|-------------------------|
| | Glu | Asp, Gln, His |
| | Gly | Ala |
| | His | Asn, Arg, Gln, Glu |
| 5 | Ile | Leu, Val |
| | Leu | Ile, Val |
| | Lys | Arg, Gln, Glu |
| | Met | Leu, Ile |
| | Phe | His, Met, Leu, Trp, Tyr |
| | Ser | Cys, Thr |
| 10 | Thr | Ser, Val |
| | Trp | Phe, Tyr |
| | Tyr | His, Phe, Trp |
| | Val | Ile, Leu, Thr |

15 Conservative amino acid substitutions generally maintain (a) the structure of the polypeptide backbone in the area of the substitution, for example, as a beta sheet or alpha helical conformation, (b) the charge or hydrophobicity of the molecule at the site of the substitution, and/or (c) the bulk of the side chain.

20 A "deletion" refers to a change in the amino acid or nucleotide sequence that results in the absence of one or more amino acid residues or nucleotides.

25 The term "derivative" refers to a chemically modified polynucleotide or polypeptide. Chemical modifications of a polynucleotide can include, for example, replacement of hydrogen by an alkyl, acyl, hydroxyl, or amino group. A derivative polynucleotide encodes a polypeptide which retains at least one biological or immunological function of the natural molecule. A derivative polypeptide is one modified by glycosylation, pegylation, or any similar process that retains at least one biological or immunological function of the polypeptide from which it was derived.

 A "detectable label" refers to a reporter molecule or enzyme that is capable of generating a measurable signal and is covalently or noncovalently joined to a polynucleotide or polypeptide.

30 "Differential expression" refers to increased or upregulated; or decreased, downregulated, or absent gene or protein expression, determined by comparing at least two different samples. Such comparisons may be carried out between, for example, a treated and an untreated sample, or a diseased and a normal sample.

35 A "fragment" is a unique portion of APRG or the polynucleotide encoding APRG which is identical in sequence to but shorter in length than the parent sequence. A fragment may comprise up to the entire length of the defined sequence, minus one nucleotide/amino acid residue. For example, a fragment may comprise from 5 to 1000 contiguous nucleotides or amino acid residues. A fragment used as a probe, primer, antigen, therapeutic molecule, or for other purposes, may be at least 5, 10, 15, 16, 20, 25, 30, 40, 50, 60, 75, 100, 150, 250 or at least 500 contiguous nucleotides or amino acid residues in length. Fragments may be preferentially selected from certain regions of a molecule. For

example, a polypeptide fragment may comprise a certain length of contiguous amino acids selected from the first 250 or 500 amino acids (or first 25% or 50%) of a polypeptide as shown in a certain defined sequence. Clearly these lengths are exemplary, and any length that is supported by the specification, including the Sequence Listing, tables, and figures, may be encompassed by the present
5 embodiments.

A fragment of SEQ ID NO:4-6 comprises a region of unique polynucleotide sequence that specifically identifies SEQ ID NO:4-6, for example, as distinct from any other sequence in the genome from which the fragment was obtained. A fragment of SEQ ID NO:4-6 is useful, for example, in hybridization and amplification technologies and in analogous methods that distinguish
10 SEQ ID NO:4-6 from related polynucleotide sequences. The precise length of a fragment of SEQ ID NO:4-6 and the region of SEQ ID NO:4-6 to which the fragment corresponds are routinely determinable by one of ordinary skill in the art based on the intended purpose for the fragment.

A fragment of SEQ ID NO:1-3 is encoded by a fragment of SEQ ID NO:4-6. A fragment of SEQ ID NO:1-3 comprises a region of unique amino acid sequence that specifically identifies SEQ ID
15 NO:1-3. For example, a fragment of SEQ ID NO:1-3 is useful as an immunogenic peptide for the development of antibodies that specifically recognize SEQ ID NO:1-3. The precise length of a fragment of SEQ ID NO:1-3 and the region of SEQ ID NO:1-3 to which the fragment corresponds are routinely determinable by one of ordinary skill in the art based on the intended purpose for the fragment.

20 A “full length” polynucleotide sequence is one containing at least a translation initiation codon (e.g., methionine) followed by an open reading frame and a translation termination codon. A “full length” polynucleotide sequence encodes a “full length” polypeptide sequence.

“Homology” refers to sequence similarity or, interchangeably, sequence identity, between two or more polynucleotide sequences or two or more polypeptide sequences.

25 The terms “percent identity” and “% identity,” as applied to polynucleotide sequences, refer to the percentage of residue matches between at least two polynucleotide sequences aligned using a standardized algorithm. Such an algorithm may insert, in a standardized and reproducible way, gaps in the sequences being compared in order to optimize alignment between two sequences, and therefore achieve a more meaningful comparison of the two sequences.

30 Percent identity between polynucleotide sequences may be determined using the default parameters of the CLUSTAL V algorithm as incorporated into the MEGALIGN version 3.12e sequence alignment program. This program is part of the LASERGENE software package, a suite of molecular biological analysis programs (DNASTAR, Madison WI). CLUSTAL V is described in Higgins, D.G. and P.M. Sharp (1989) CABIOS 5:151-153 and in Higgins, D.G. et al. (1992) CABIOS 8:189-191.

For pairwise alignments of polynucleotide sequences, the default parameters are set as follows:

Ktuple=2, gap penalty=5, window=4, and "diagonals saved"=4. The "weighted" residue weight table is selected as the default. Percent identity is reported by CLUSTAL V as the "percent similarity" between aligned polynucleotide sequences.

5 Alternatively, a suite of commonly used and freely available sequence comparison algorithms is provided by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) Basic Local Alignment Search Tool (BLAST) (Altschul, S.F. et al. (1990) J. Mol. Biol. 215:403-410), which is available from several sources, including the NCBI, Bethesda, MD, and on the Internet at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/BLAST/>. The BLAST software suite includes various sequence analysis
10 programs including "blastn," that is used to align a known polynucleotide sequence with other polynucleotide sequences from a variety of databases. Also available is a tool called "BLAST 2 Sequences" that is used for direct pairwise comparison of two nucleotide sequences. "BLAST 2 Sequences" can be accessed and used interactively at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/gorf/bl2.html>. The "BLAST 2 Sequences" tool can be used for both blastn and blastp (discussed below). BLAST
15 programs are commonly used with gap and other parameters set to default settings. For example, to compare two nucleotide sequences, one may use blastn with the "BLAST 2 Sequences" tool Version 2.0.12 (April-21-2000) set at default parameters. Such default parameters may be, for example:

Matrix: BLOSUM62

Reward for match: 1

20 *Penalty for mismatch: -2*

Open Gap: 5 and Extension Gap: 2 penalties

Gap x drop-off: 50

Expect: 10

Word Size: 11

25 *Filter: on*

Percent identity may be measured over the length of an entire defined sequence, for example, as defined by a particular SEQ ID number, or may be measured over a shorter length, for example, over the length of a fragment taken from a larger, defined sequence, for instance, a fragment of at least 20, at least 30, at least 40, at least 50, at least 70, at least 100, or at least 200 contiguous nucleotides. Such
30 lengths are exemplary only, and it is understood that any fragment length supported by the sequences shown herein, in the tables, figures, or Sequence Listing, may be used to describe a length over which percentage identity may be measured.

Nucleic acid sequences that do not show a high degree of identity may nevertheless encode similar amino acid sequences due to the degeneracy of the genetic code. It is understood that changes in

a nucleic acid sequence can be made using this degeneracy to produce multiple nucleic acid sequences that all encode substantially the same protein.

The phrases “percent identity” and “% identity,” as applied to polypeptide sequences, refer to the percentage of residue matches between at least two polypeptide sequences aligned using a standardized algorithm. Methods of polypeptide sequence alignment are well-known. Some alignment methods take into account conservative amino acid substitutions. Such conservative substitutions, explained in more detail above, generally preserve the charge and hydrophobicity at the site of substitution, thus preserving the structure (and therefore function) of the polypeptide.

Percent identity between polypeptide sequences may be determined using the default parameters of the CLUSTAL V algorithm as incorporated into the MEGALIGN version 3.12e sequence alignment program (described and referenced above). For pairwise alignments of polypeptide sequences using CLUSTAL V, the default parameters are set as follows: Ktuple=1, gap penalty=3, window=5, and “diagonals saved”=5. The PAM250 matrix is selected as the default residue weight table. As with polynucleotide alignments, the percent identity is reported by CLUSTAL V as the “percent similarity” between aligned polypeptide sequence pairs.

Alternatively the NCBI BLAST software suite may be used. For example, for a pairwise comparison of two polypeptide sequences, one may use the “BLAST 2 Sequences” tool Version 2.0.12 (April-21-2000) with blastp set at default parameters. Such default parameters may be, for example:

Matrix: BLOSUM62

Open Gap: 11 and Extension Gap: 1 penalties

Gap x drop-off: 50

Expect: 10

Word Size: 3

Filter: on

Percent identity may be measured over the length of an entire defined polypeptide sequence, for example, as defined by a particular SEQ ID number, or may be measured over a shorter length, for example, over the length of a fragment taken from a larger, defined polypeptide sequence, for instance, a fragment of at least 15, at least 20, at least 30, at least 40, at least 50, at least 70 or at least 150 contiguous residues. Such lengths are exemplary only, and it is understood that any fragment length supported by the sequences shown herein, in the tables, figures or Sequence Listing, may be used to describe a length over which percentage identity may be measured.

“Human artificial chromosomes” (HACs) are linear microchromosomes which may contain DNA sequences of about 6 kb to 10 Mb in size and which contain all of the elements required for chromosome replication, segregation and maintenance.

The term "humanized antibody" refers to an antibody molecule in which the amino acid sequence in the non-antigen binding regions has been altered so that the antibody more closely resembles a human antibody, and still retains its original binding ability.

"Hybridization" refers to the process by which a polynucleotide strand anneals with a complementary strand through base pairing under defined hybridization conditions. Specific hybridization is an indication that two nucleic acid sequences share a high degree of complementarity. Specific hybridization complexes form under permissive annealing conditions and remain hybridized after the "washing" step(s). The washing step(s) is particularly important in determining the stringency of the hybridization process, with more stringent conditions allowing less non-specific binding, i.e., binding between pairs of nucleic acid strands that are not perfectly matched. Permissive conditions for annealing of nucleic acid sequences are routinely determinable by one of ordinary skill in the art and may be consistent among hybridization experiments, whereas wash conditions may be varied among experiments to achieve the desired stringency, and therefore hybridization specificity. Permissive annealing conditions occur, for example, at 68°C in the presence of about 6 x SSC, about 1% (w/v) SDS, and about 100 µg/ml sheared, denatured salmon sperm DNA.

Generally, stringency of hybridization is expressed, in part, with reference to the temperature under which the wash step is carried out. Such wash temperatures are typically selected to be about 5°C to 20°C lower than the thermal melting point (T_m) for the specific sequence at a defined ionic strength and pH. The T_m is the temperature (under defined ionic strength and pH) at which 50% of the target sequence hybridizes to a perfectly matched probe. An equation for calculating T_m and conditions for nucleic acid hybridization are well known and can be found in Sambrook, J. et al. (1989) Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual, 2nd ed., vol. 1-3, Cold Spring Harbor Press, Plainview NY; specifically see volume 2, chapter 9.

High stringency conditions for hybridization between polynucleotides of the present invention include wash conditions of 68°C in the presence of about 0.2 x SSC and about 0.1% SDS, for 1 hour. Alternatively, temperatures of about 65°C, 60°C, 55°C, or 42°C may be used. SSC concentration may be varied from about 0.1 to 2 x SSC, with SDS being present at about 0.1%. Typically, blocking reagents are used to block non-specific hybridization. Such blocking reagents include, for instance, sheared and denatured salmon sperm DNA at about 100-200 µg/ml. Organic solvent, such as formamide at a concentration of about 35-50% v/v, may also be used under particular circumstances, such as for RNA:DNA hybridizations. Useful variations on these wash conditions will be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. Hybridization, particularly under high stringency conditions, may be suggestive of evolutionary similarity between the nucleotides. Such similarity is strongly indicative of a similar role for the nucleotides and their encoded polypeptides.

The term "hybridization complex" refers to a complex formed between two nucleic acid sequences by virtue of the formation of hydrogen bonds between complementary bases. A hybridization complex may be formed in solution (e.g., C₀t or R₀t analysis) or formed between one nucleic acid sequence present in solution and another nucleic acid sequence immobilized on a solid support (e.g.,
5 paper, membranes, filters, chips, pins or glass slides, or any other appropriate substrate to which cells or their nucleic acids have been fixed).

The words "insertion" and "addition" refer to changes in an amino acid or nucleotide sequence resulting in the addition of one or more amino acid residues or nucleotides, respectively.

"Immune response" can refer to conditions associated with inflammation, trauma, immune
10 disorders, or infectious or genetic disease, etc. These conditions can be characterized by expression of various factors, e.g., cytokines, chemokines, and other signaling molecules, which may affect cellular and systemic defense systems.

An "immunogenic fragment" is a polypeptide or oligopeptide fragment of APRG which is capable of eliciting an immune response when introduced into a living organism, for example, a
15 mammal. The term "immunogenic fragment" also includes any polypeptide or oligopeptide fragment of APRG which is useful in any of the antibody production methods disclosed herein or known in the art.

The term "microarray" refers to an arrangement of a plurality of polynucleotides, polypeptides, or other chemical compounds on a substrate.

The terms "element" and "array element" refer to a polynucleotide, polypeptide, or other
20 chemical compound having a unique and defined position on a microarray.

The term "modulate" refers to a change in the activity of APRG. For example, modulation may cause an increase or a decrease in protein activity, binding characteristics, or any other biological, functional, or immunological properties of APRG.

The phrases "nucleic acid" and "nucleic acid sequence" refer to a nucleotide, oligonucleotide,
25 polynucleotide, or any fragment thereof. These phrases also refer to DNA or RNA of genomic or synthetic origin which may be single-stranded or double-stranded and may represent the sense or the antisense strand, to peptide nucleic acid (PNA), or to any DNA-like or RNA-like material.

"Operably linked" refers to the situation in which a first nucleic acid sequence is placed in a functional relationship with a second nucleic acid sequence. For instance, a promoter is operably
30 linked to a coding sequence if the promoter affects the transcription or expression of the coding sequence. Operably linked DNA sequences may be in close proximity or contiguous and, where necessary to join two protein coding regions, in the same reading frame.

"Peptide nucleic acid" (PNA) refers to an antisense molecule or anti-gene agent which comprises an oligonucleotide of at least about 5 nucleotides in length linked to a peptide backbone of

amino acid residues ending in lysine. The terminal lysine confers solubility to the composition. PNAs preferentially bind complementary single stranded DNA or RNA and stop transcript elongation, and may be pegylated to extend their lifespan in the cell.

“Post-translational modification” of an APRG may involve lipidation, glycosylation, phosphorylation, acetylation, racemization, proteolytic cleavage, and other modifications known in the art. These processes may occur synthetically or biochemically. Biochemical modifications will vary by cell type depending on the enzymatic milieu of APRG.

“Probe” refers to nucleic acid sequences encoding APRG, their complements, or fragments thereof, which are used to detect identical, allelic or related nucleic acid sequences. Probes are isolated oligonucleotides or polynucleotides attached to a detectable label or reporter molecule. Typical labels include radioactive isotopes, ligands, chemiluminescent agents, and enzymes. “Primers” are short nucleic acids, usually DNA oligonucleotides, which may be annealed to a target polynucleotide by complementary base-pairing. The primer may then be extended along the target DNA strand by a DNA polymerase enzyme. Primer pairs can be used for amplification (and identification) of a nucleic acid sequence, e.g., by the polymerase chain reaction (PCR).

Probes and primers as used in the present invention typically comprise at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a known sequence. In order to enhance specificity, longer probes and primers may also be employed, such as probes and primers that comprise at least 20, 25, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100, or at least 150 consecutive nucleotides of the disclosed nucleic acid sequences. Probes and primers may be considerably longer than these examples, and it is understood that any length supported by the specification, including the tables, figures, and Sequence Listing, may be used.

Methods for preparing and using probes and primers are described in the references, for example Sambrook, J. et al. (1989) Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual, 2nd ed., vol. 1-3, Cold Spring Harbor Press, Plainview NY; Ausubel, F.M. et al. (1987) Current Protocols in Molecular Biology, Greene Publ. Assoc. & Wiley-Intersciences, New York NY; Innis, M. et al. (1990) PCR Protocols, A Guide to Methods and Applications, Academic Press, San Diego CA. PCR primer pairs can be derived from a known sequence, for example, by using computer programs intended for that purpose such as Primer (Version 0.5, 1991, Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research, Cambridge MA).

Oligonucleotides for use as primers are selected using software known in the art for such purpose. For example, OLIGO 4.06 software is useful for the selection of PCR primer pairs of up to 100 nucleotides each, and for the analysis of oligonucleotides and larger polynucleotides of up to 5,000 nucleotides from an input polynucleotide sequence of up to 32 kilobases. Similar primer selection programs have incorporated additional features for expanded capabilities. For example, the PrimOU

primer selection program (available to the public from the Genome Center at University of Texas South West Medical Center, Dallas TX) is capable of choosing specific primers from megabase sequences and is thus useful for designing primers on a genome-wide scope. The Primer3 primer selection program (available to the public from the Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research, 5 Cambridge MA) allows the user to input a “mispriming library,” in which sequences to avoid as primer binding sites are user-specified. Primer3 is useful, in particular, for the selection of oligonucleotides for microarrays. (The source code for the latter two primer selection programs may also be obtained from their respective sources and modified to meet the user’s specific needs.) The PrimeGen program (available to the public from the UK Human Genome Mapping Project Resource Centre, Cambridge 10 UK) designs primers based on multiple sequence alignments, thereby allowing selection of primers that hybridize to either the most conserved or least conserved regions of aligned nucleic acid sequences. Hence, this program is useful for identification of both unique and conserved oligonucleotides and polynucleotide fragments. The oligonucleotides and polynucleotide fragments identified by any of the above selection methods are useful in hybridization technologies, for example, as PCR or sequencing 15 primers, microarray elements, or specific probes to identify fully or partially complementary polynucleotides in a sample of nucleic acids. Methods of oligonucleotide selection are not limited to those described above.

A “recombinant nucleic acid” is a sequence that is not naturally occurring or has a sequence that is made by an artificial combination of two or more otherwise separated segments of sequence. 20 This artificial combination is often accomplished by chemical synthesis or, more commonly, by the artificial manipulation of isolated segments of nucleic acids, e.g., by genetic engineering techniques such as those described in Sambrook, supra. The term recombinant includes nucleic acids that have been altered solely by addition, substitution, or deletion of a portion of the nucleic acid. Frequently, a recombinant nucleic acid may include a nucleic acid sequence operably linked to a promoter sequence. 25 Such a recombinant nucleic acid may be part of a vector that is used, for example, to transform a cell.

Alternatively, such recombinant nucleic acids may be part of a viral vector, e.g., based on a vaccinia virus, that could be used to vaccinate a mammal wherein the recombinant nucleic acid is expressed, inducing a protective immunological response in the mammal.

A “regulatory element” refers to a nucleic acid sequence usually derived from untranslated 30 regions of a gene and includes enhancers, promoters, introns, and 5' and 3' untranslated regions (UTRs). Regulatory elements interact with host or viral proteins which control transcription, translation, or RNA stability.

“Reporter molecules” are chemical or biochemical moieties used for labeling a nucleic acid, amino acid, or antibody. Reporter molecules include radionuclides; enzymes; fluorescent,

chemiluminescent, or chromogenic agents; substrates; cofactors; inhibitors; magnetic particles; and other moieties known in the art.

An “RNA equivalent,” in reference to a DNA sequence, is composed of the same linear sequence of nucleotides as the reference DNA sequence with the exception that all occurrences of the nitrogenous base thymine are replaced with uracil, and the sugar backbone is composed of ribose instead of deoxyribose.

The term “sample” is used in its broadest sense. A sample suspected of containing APRG, nucleic acids encoding APRG, or fragments thereof may comprise a bodily fluid; an extract from a cell, chromosome, organelle, or membrane isolated from a cell; a cell; genomic DNA, RNA, or cDNA, in solution or bound to a substrate; a tissue; a tissue print; etc.

The terms “specific binding” and “specifically binding” refer to that interaction between a protein or peptide and an agonist, an antibody, an antagonist, a small molecule, or any natural or synthetic binding composition. The interaction is dependent upon the presence of a particular structure of the protein, e.g., the antigenic determinant or epitope, recognized by the binding molecule. For example, if an antibody is specific for epitope “A,” the presence of a polypeptide comprising the epitope A, or the presence of free unlabeled A, in a reaction containing free labeled A and the antibody will reduce the amount of labeled A that binds to the antibody.

The term “substantially purified” refers to nucleic acid or amino acid sequences that are removed from their natural environment and are isolated or separated, and are at least 60% free, preferably at least 75% free, and most preferably at least 90% free from other components with which they are naturally associated.

A “substitution” refers to the replacement of one or more amino acid residues or nucleotides by different amino acid residues or nucleotides, respectively.

“Substrate” refers to any suitable rigid or semi-rigid support including membranes, filters, chips, slides, wafers, fibers, magnetic or nonmagnetic beads, gels, tubing, plates, polymers, microparticles and capillaries. The substrate can have a variety of surface forms, such as wells, trenches, pins, channels and pores, to which polynucleotides or polypeptides are bound.

A “transcript image” refers to the collective pattern of gene expression by a particular cell type or tissue under given conditions at a given time.

“Transformation” describes a process by which exogenous DNA is introduced into a recipient cell. Transformation may occur under natural or artificial conditions according to various methods well known in the art, and may rely on any known method for the insertion of foreign nucleic acid sequences into a prokaryotic or eukaryotic host cell. The method for transformation is selected based on the type of host cell being transformed and may include, but is not limited to, bacteriophage or viral infection,

electroporation, heat shock, lipofection, and particle bombardment. The term "transformed cells" includes stably transformed cells in which the inserted DNA is capable of replication either as an autonomously replicating plasmid or as part of the host chromosome, as well as transiently transformed cells which express the inserted DNA or RNA for limited periods of time.

5 A "transgenic organism," as used herein, is any organism, including but not limited to animals and plants, in which one or more of the cells of the organism contains heterologous nucleic acid introduced by way of human intervention, such as by transgenic techniques well known in the art. The nucleic acid is introduced into the cell, directly or indirectly by introduction into a precursor of the cell, by way of deliberate genetic manipulation, such as by microinjection or by infection with
10 a recombinant virus. The term genetic manipulation does not include classical cross-breeding, or in vitro fertilization, but rather is directed to the introduction of a recombinant DNA molecule. The transgenic organisms contemplated in accordance with the present invention include bacteria, cyanobacteria, fungi, plants and animals. The isolated DNA of the present invention can be introduced into the host by methods known in the art, for example infection, transfection,
15 transformation or transconjugation. Techniques for transferring the DNA of the present invention into such organisms are widely known and provided in references such as Sambrook et al. (1989), supra.

A "variant" of a particular nucleic acid sequence is defined as a nucleic acid sequence having at least 40% sequence identity to the particular nucleic acid sequence over a certain length of one of the
20 nucleic acid sequences using blastn with the "BLAST 2 Sequences" tool Version 2.0.9 (May-07-1999) set at default parameters. Such a pair of nucleic acids may show, for example, at least 50%, at least 60%, at least 70%, at least 80%, at least 85%, at least 90%, at least 91%, at least 92%, at least 93%, at least 94%, at least 95%, at least 96%, at least 97%, at least 98%, or at least 99% or greater sequence identity over a certain defined length. A variant may be described as, for example, an "allelic" (as
25 defined above), "splice," "species," or "polymorphic" variant. A splice variant may have significant identity to a reference molecule, but will generally have a greater or lesser number of polynucleotides due to alternative splicing of exons during mRNA processing. The corresponding polypeptide may possess additional functional domains or lack domains that are present in the reference molecule. Species variants are polynucleotide sequences that vary from one species to another. The resulting
30 polypeptides will generally have significant amino acid identity relative to each other. A polymorphic variant is a variation in the polynucleotide sequence of a particular gene between individuals of a given species. Polymorphic variants also may encompass "single nucleotide polymorphisms" (SNPs) in which the polynucleotide sequence varies by one nucleotide base. The presence of SNPs may be indicative of, for example, a certain population, a disease state, or a propensity for a disease state.

A "variant" of a particular polypeptide sequence is defined as a polypeptide sequence having at least 40% sequence identity to the particular polypeptide sequence over a certain length of one of the polypeptide sequences using blastp with the "BLAST 2 Sequences" tool Version 2.0.9 (May-07-1999) set at default parameters. Such a pair of polypeptides may show, for example, at least 50%, at least
5 60%, at least 70%, at least 80%, at least 90%, at least 91%, at least 92%, at least 93%, at least 94%, at least 95%, at least 96%, at least 97%, at least 98%, or at least 99% or greater sequence identity over a certain defined length of one of the polypeptides.

THE INVENTION

10 The invention is based on the discovery of new human apoptosis regulators (APRG), the polynucleotides encoding APRG, and the use of these compositions for the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of cell proliferative, immunological, and reproductive disorders.

Table 1 summarizes the nomenclature for the full length polynucleotide and polypeptide sequences of the invention. Each polynucleotide and its corresponding polypeptide are correlated to a
15 single Incyte project identification number (Incyte Project ID). Each polypeptide sequence is denoted by both a polypeptide sequence identification number (Polypeptide SEQ ID NO:) and an Incyte polypeptide sequence number (Incyte Polypeptide ID) as shown. Each polynucleotide sequence is denoted by both a polynucleotide sequence identification number (Polynucleotide SEQ ID NO:) and an Incyte polynucleotide consensus sequence number (Incyte Polynucleotide ID) as shown.

20 Table 2 shows sequences with homology to the polypeptides of the invention as identified by BLAST analysis against the GenBank protein (genpept) database. Columns 1 and 2 show the polypeptide sequence identification number (Polypeptide SEQ ID NO:) and the corresponding Incyte polypeptide sequence number (Incyte Polypeptide ID) for polypeptides of the invention. Column 3 shows the GenBank identification number (Genbank ID NO:) of the nearest GenBank homolog.
25 Column 4 shows the probability score for the match between each polypeptide and its GenBank homolog. Column 5 shows the annotation of the GenBank homolog along with relevant citations where applicable, all of which are expressly incorporated by reference herein.

Table 3 shows various structural features of the polypeptides of the invention. Columns 1 and 2 show the polypeptide sequence identification number (SEQ ID NO:) and the corresponding Incyte
30 polypeptide sequence number (Incyte Polypeptide ID) for each polypeptide of the invention. Column 3 shows the number of amino acid residues in each polypeptide. Column 4 shows potential phosphorylation sites, and column 5 shows potential glycosylation sites, as determined by the MOTIFS program of the GCG sequence analysis software package (Genetics Computer Group, Madison WI). Column 6 shows amino acid residues comprising signature sequences, domains, and motifs. Column 7

shows analytical methods for protein structure/function analysis and in some cases, searchable databases to which the analytical methods were applied.

Together, Tables 2 and 3 summarize the properties of polypeptides of the invention, and these properties establish that the claimed polypeptides are apoptosis regulators. For example, SEQ ID NO:1 is 51% identical to zebrafish Dedd1, a death effector domain protein (GenBank ID g7673638) as determined by the Basic Local Alignment Search Tool (BLAST). (See Table 2.) The BLAST probability score is $5.1\text{e-}70$, which indicates the probability of obtaining the observed polypeptide sequence alignment by chance. SEQ ID NO:1 also contains a death effector domain as determined by searching for statistically significant matches in the hidden Markov model (HMM)-based PFAM database of conserved protein family domains. (See Table 3.) Data from BLAST analyses provide further corroborative evidence that SEQ ID NO:1 is a regulator of apoptosis having a death effector domain.

In an alternative example, SEQ ID NO:2 is 36% identical to human caspase recruitment domain protein 7 (g10198209) as determined by the Basic Local Alignment Search Tool (BLAST). (See Table 2.) The BLAST probability score is $1.1\text{e-}66$, which indicates the probability of obtaining the observed polypeptide sequence alignment by chance.

In an alternative example, SEQ ID NO:3 is 33% identical to human T-cell leukemia virus type-I (HLV-I) Tax-binding protein (TXBP151) (GenBank ID g5776545) as determined by the Basic Local Alignment Search Tool (BLAST). (See Table 2.) The BLAST probability score is $2.1\text{e-}73$, which indicates the probability of obtaining the observed polypeptide sequence alignment by chance. Tax-binding protein has been shown to inhibit apoptosis induced by tumor necrosis factor in NIH 3T3 cells (De Valck, D. et al. (1999) Oncogene 18:4182-4190). Data from MOTIFS, HMMER-PFAM and BLIMPS analyses provide further corroborative evidence that SEQ ID NO:3 is an apoptosis-related protein. SEQ ID NO:3 contains a RGD motif and a Leucine Zipper motif as determined by the MOTIFS program that searches for patterns that match those defined in Prosite. (See Table 3.)

SEQ ID NO:3 also contains sequence homology to the NDP52 nuclear domain protein as determined by the Blocks IMProved Searcher (BLIMPS) that matches a sequence against those in BLOCKS, PRINTS, DOMO, PRODOM, and PFAM databases to search for gene families, sequence homology, and structural fingerprint regions. (See Table 3.) This homology indicates that SEQ ID NO:3 can be localized to the nucleus. Therefore, the protein of SEQ ID NO:3 may be used as a nuclear marker protein. The algorithms and parameters for the analysis of SEQ ID NO:1-3 are described in Table 7.

As shown in Table 4, the full length polynucleotide sequences of the present invention were assembled using cDNA sequences or coding (exon) sequences derived from genomic DNA, or any

combination of these two types of sequences. Columns 1 and 2 list the polynucleotide sequence identification number (Polynucleotide SEQ ID NO:) and the corresponding Incyte polynucleotide consensus sequence number (Incyte Polynucleotide ID) for each polynucleotide of the invention. Column 3 shows the length of each polynucleotide sequence in basepairs. Column 4 lists fragments of the polynucleotide sequences which are useful, for example, in hybridization or amplification technologies that identify SEQ ID NO:4-6 or that distinguish between SEQ ID NO:4-6 and related polynucleotide sequences. Column 5 shows identification numbers corresponding to cDNA sequences, coding sequences (exons) predicted from genomic DNA, and/or sequence assemblages comprised of both cDNA and genomic DNA. These sequences were used to assemble the full length polynucleotide sequences of the invention. Columns 6 and 7 of Table 4 show the nucleotide start (5') and stop (3') positions of the cDNA and/or genomic sequences in column 5 relative to their respective full length sequences.

The identification numbers in Column 5 of Table 4 may refer specifically, for example, to Incyte cDNAs along with their corresponding cDNA libraries. For example, 7018482H1 is the identification number of an Incyte cDNA sequence, and KIDNNOC01 is the cDNA library from which it is derived. Incyte cDNAs for which cDNA libraries are not indicated were derived from pooled cDNA libraries (e.g., 72070238V1). Alternatively, the identification numbers in column 5 may refer to GenBank cDNAs or ESTs which contributed to the assembly of the full length polynucleotide sequences. Alternatively, the identification numbers in column 5 may refer to coding regions predicted by Genscan analysis of genomic DNA. For example, GNN.g8099799_000020_006 is the identification number of a Genscan-predicted coding sequence, with g8099799 being the GenBank identification number of the sequence to which Genscan was applied. The Genscan-predicted coding sequences may have been edited prior to assembly. (See Example IV.) Alternatively, the identification numbers in column 5 may refer to assemblages of both cDNA and Genscan-predicted exons brought together by an "exon stitching" algorithm. (See Example V.) Alternatively, the identification numbers in column 5 may refer to assemblages of both cDNA and Genscan-predicted exons brought together by an "exon-stretching" algorithm. (See Example V.) In some cases, Incyte cDNA coverage redundant with the sequence coverage shown in column 5 was obtained to confirm the final consensus polynucleotide sequence, but the relevant Incyte cDNA identification numbers are not shown.

Table 5 shows the representative cDNA libraries for those full length polynucleotide sequences which were assembled using Incyte cDNA sequences. The representative cDNA library is the Incyte cDNA library which is most frequently represented by the Incyte cDNA sequences which were used to assemble and confirm the above polynucleotide sequences. The tissues and vectors which were used to construct the cDNA libraries shown in Table 5 are described in Table 6.

The invention also encompasses APRG variants. A preferred APRG variant is one which has at least about 80%, or alternatively at least about 90%, or even at least about 95% amino acid sequence identity to the APRG amino acid sequence, and which contains at least one functional or structural characteristic of APRG.

5 The invention also encompasses polynucleotides which encode APRG. In a particular embodiment, the invention encompasses a polynucleotide sequence comprising a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6, which encodes APRG. The polynucleotide sequences of SEQ ID NO:4-6, as presented in the Sequence Listing, embrace the equivalent RNA sequences, wherein occurrences of the nitrogenous base thymine are replaced with uracil, and the sugar backbone is
10 composed of ribose instead of deoxyribose.

 The invention also encompasses a variant of a polynucleotide sequence encoding APRG. In particular, such a variant polynucleotide sequence will have at least about 70%, or alternatively at least about 85%, or even at least about 95% polynucleotide sequence identity to the polynucleotide sequence encoding APRG. A particular aspect of the invention encompasses a variant of a polynucleotide
15 sequence comprising a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6 which has at least about 70%, or alternatively at least about 85%, or even at least about 95% polynucleotide sequence identity to a nucleic acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6. Any one of the polynucleotide variants described above can encode an amino acid sequence which contains at least one functional or structural characteristic of APRG.

20 It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that as a result of the degeneracy of the genetic code, a multitude of polynucleotide sequences encoding APRG, some bearing minimal similarity to the polynucleotide sequences of any known and naturally occurring gene, may be produced. Thus, the invention contemplates each and every possible variation of polynucleotide sequence that could be made by selecting combinations based on possible codon choices. These combinations are made in
25 accordance with the standard triplet genetic code as applied to the polynucleotide sequence of naturally occurring APRG, and all such variations are to be considered as being specifically disclosed.

 Although nucleotide sequences which encode APRG and its variants are generally capable of hybridizing to the nucleotide sequence of the naturally occurring APRG under appropriately selected conditions of stringency, it may be advantageous to produce nucleotide sequences encoding APRG or
30 its derivatives possessing a substantially different codon usage, e.g., inclusion of non-naturally occurring codons. Codons may be selected to increase the rate at which expression of the peptide occurs in a particular prokaryotic or eukaryotic host in accordance with the frequency with which particular codons are utilized by the host. Other reasons for substantially altering the nucleotide sequence encoding APRG and its derivatives without altering the encoded amino acid sequences include

the production of RNA transcripts having more desirable properties, such as a greater half-life, than transcripts produced from the naturally occurring sequence.

The invention also encompasses production of DNA sequences which encode APRG and APRG derivatives, or fragments thereof, entirely by synthetic chemistry. After production, the synthetic sequence may be inserted into any of the many available expression vectors and cell systems using reagents well known in the art. Moreover, synthetic chemistry may be used to introduce mutations into a sequence encoding APRG or any fragment thereof.

Also encompassed by the invention are polynucleotide sequences that are capable of hybridizing to the claimed polynucleotide sequences, and, in particular, to those shown in SEQ ID NO:4-6 and fragments thereof under various conditions of stringency. (See, e.g., Wahl, G.M. and S.L. Berger (1987) *Methods Enzymol.* 152:399-407; Kimmel, A.R. (1987) *Methods Enzymol.* 152:507-511.) Hybridization conditions, including annealing and wash conditions, are described in "Definitions."

Methods for DNA sequencing are well known in the art and may be used to practice any of the embodiments of the invention. The methods may employ such enzymes as the Klenow fragment of DNA polymerase I, SEQUENASE (US Biochemical, Cleveland OH), Taq polymerase (Applied Biosystems), thermostable T7 polymerase (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech, Piscataway NJ), or combinations of polymerases and proofreading exonucleases such as those found in the ELONGASE amplification system (Life Technologies, Gaithersburg MD). Preferably, sequence preparation is automated with machines such as the MICROLAB 2200 liquid transfer system (Hamilton, Reno NV), PTC200 thermal cycler (MJ Research, Watertown MA) and ABI CATALYST 800 thermal cycler (Applied Biosystems). Sequencing is then carried out using either the ABI 373 or 377 DNA sequencing system (Applied Biosystems), the MEGABACE 1000 DNA sequencing system (Molecular Dynamics, Sunnyvale CA), or other systems known in the art. The resulting sequences are analyzed using a variety of algorithms which are well known in the art. (See, e.g., Ausubel, F.M. (1997) Short Protocols in Molecular Biology, John Wiley & Sons, New York NY, unit 7.7; Meyers, R.A. (1995) Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, Wiley VCH, New York NY, pp. 856-853.)

The nucleic acid sequences encoding APRG may be extended utilizing a partial nucleotide sequence and employing various PCR-based methods known in the art to detect upstream sequences, such as promoters and regulatory elements. For example, one method which may be employed, restriction-site PCR, uses universal and nested primers to amplify unknown sequence from genomic DNA within a cloning vector. (See, e.g., Sarkar, G. (1993) *PCR Methods Applic.* 2:318-322.) Another method, inverse PCR, uses primers that extend in divergent directions to amplify unknown sequence from a circularized template. The template is derived from restriction fragments comprising a

known genomic locus and surrounding sequences. (See, e.g., Triglia, T. et al. (1988) Nucleic Acids Res. 16:8186.) A third method, capture PCR, involves PCR amplification of DNA fragments adjacent to known sequences in human and yeast artificial chromosome DNA. (See, e.g., Lagerstrom, M. et al. (1991) PCR Methods Applic. 1:111-119.) In this method, multiple restriction enzyme digestions and ligations may be used to insert an engineered double-stranded sequence into a region of unknown sequence before performing PCR. Other methods which may be used to retrieve unknown sequences are known in the art. (See, e.g., Parker, J.D. et al. (1991) Nucleic Acids Res. 19:3055-3060). Additionally, one may use PCR, nested primers, and PROMOTERFINDER libraries (Clontech, Palo Alto CA) to walk genomic DNA. This procedure avoids the need to screen libraries and is useful in finding intron/exon junctions. For all PCR-based methods, primers may be designed using commercially available software, such as OLIGO 4.06 primer analysis software (National Biosciences, Plymouth MN) or another appropriate program, to be about 22 to 30 nucleotides in length, to have a GC content of about 50% or more, and to anneal to the template at temperatures of about 68°C to 72°C.

When screening for full length cDNAs, it is preferable to use libraries that have been size-selected to include larger cDNAs. In addition, random-primed libraries, which often include sequences containing the 5' regions of genes, are preferable for situations in which an oligo d(T) library does not yield a full-length cDNA. Genomic libraries may be useful for extension of sequence into 5' non-transcribed regulatory regions.

Capillary electrophoresis systems which are commercially available may be used to analyze the size or confirm the nucleotide sequence of sequencing or PCR products. In particular, capillary sequencing may employ flowable polymers for electrophoretic separation, four different nucleotide-specific, laser-stimulated fluorescent dyes, and a charge coupled device camera for detection of the emitted wavelengths. Output/light intensity may be converted to electrical signal using appropriate software (e.g., GENOTYPER and SEQUENCE NAVIGATOR, Applied Biosystems), and the entire process from loading of samples to computer analysis and electronic data display may be computer controlled. Capillary electrophoresis is especially preferable for sequencing small DNA fragments which may be present in limited amounts in a particular sample.

In another embodiment of the invention, polynucleotide sequences or fragments thereof which encode APRG may be cloned in recombinant DNA molecules that direct expression of APRG, or fragments or functional equivalents thereof, in appropriate host cells. Due to the inherent degeneracy of the genetic code, other DNA sequences which encode substantially the same or a functionally equivalent amino acid sequence may be produced and used to express APRG.

The nucleotide sequences of the present invention can be engineered using methods generally

known in the art in order to alter APRG-encoding sequences for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, modification of the cloning, processing, and/or expression of the gene product. DNA shuffling by random fragmentation and PCR reassembly of gene fragments and synthetic oligonucleotides may be used to engineer the nucleotide sequences. For example, oligonucleotide-mediated site-directed mutagenesis may be used to introduce mutations that create new restriction sites, alter glycosylation patterns, change codon preference, produce splice variants, and so forth.

The nucleotides of the present invention may be subjected to DNA shuffling techniques such as MOLECULARBREEDING (Maxygen Inc., Santa Clara CA; described in U.S. Patent Number 5,837,458; Chang, C.-C. et al. (1999) Nat. Biotechnol. 17:793-797; Christians, F.C. et al. (1999) Nat. Biotechnol. 17:259-264; and Cramer, A. et al. (1996) Nat. Biotechnol. 14:315-319) to alter or improve the biological properties of APRG, such as its biological or enzymatic activity or its ability to bind to other molecules or compounds. DNA shuffling is a process by which a library of gene variants is produced using PCR-mediated recombination of gene fragments. The library is then subjected to selection or screening procedures that identify those gene variants with the desired properties. These preferred variants may then be pooled and further subjected to recursive rounds of DNA shuffling and selection/screening. Thus, genetic diversity is created through "artificial" breeding and rapid molecular evolution. For example, fragments of a single gene containing random point mutations may be recombined, screened, and then reshuffled until the desired properties are optimized. Alternatively, fragments of a given gene may be recombined with fragments of homologous genes in the same gene family, either from the same or different species, thereby maximizing the genetic diversity of multiple naturally occurring genes in a directed and controllable manner.

In another embodiment, sequences encoding APRG may be synthesized, in whole or in part, using chemical methods well known in the art. (See, e.g., Caruthers, M.H. et al. (1980) Nucleic Acids Symp. Ser. 7:215-223; and Horn, T. et al. (1980) Nucleic Acids Symp. Ser. 7:225-232.) Alternatively, APRG itself or a fragment thereof may be synthesized using chemical methods. For example, peptide synthesis can be performed using various solution-phase or solid-phase techniques. (See, e.g., Creighton, T. (1984) Proteins, Structures and Molecular Properties, WH Freeman, New York NY, pp. 55-60; and Roberge, J.Y. et al. (1995) Science 269:202-204.) Automated synthesis may be achieved using the ABI 431A peptide synthesizer (Applied Biosystems). Additionally, the amino acid sequence of APRG, or any part thereof, may be altered during direct synthesis and/or combined with sequences from other proteins, or any part thereof, to produce a variant polypeptide or a polypeptide having a sequence of a naturally occurring polypeptide.

The peptide may be substantially purified by preparative high performance liquid

chromatography. (See, e.g., Chiez, R.M. and F.Z. Regnier (1990) *Methods Enzymol.* 182:392-421.) The composition of the synthetic peptides may be confirmed by amino acid analysis or by sequencing. (See, e.g., Creighton, *supra*, pp. 28-53.)

In order to express a biologically active APRG, the nucleotide sequences encoding APRG or derivatives thereof may be inserted into an appropriate expression vector, i.e., a vector which contains the necessary elements for transcriptional and translational control of the inserted coding sequence in a suitable host. These elements include regulatory sequences, such as enhancers, constitutive and inducible promoters, and 5' and 3' untranslated regions in the vector and in polynucleotide sequences encoding APRG. Such elements may vary in their strength and specificity. Specific initiation signals may also be used to achieve more efficient translation of sequences encoding APRG. Such signals include the ATG initiation codon and adjacent sequences, e.g. the Kozak sequence. In cases where sequences encoding APRG and its initiation codon and upstream regulatory sequences are inserted into the appropriate expression vector, no additional transcriptional or translational control signals may be needed. However, in cases where only coding sequence, or a fragment thereof, is inserted, exogenous translational control signals including an in-frame ATG initiation codon should be provided by the vector. Exogenous translational elements and initiation codons may be of various origins, both natural and synthetic. The efficiency of expression may be enhanced by the inclusion of enhancers appropriate for the particular host cell system used. (See, e.g., Scharf, D. et al. (1994) *Results Probl. Cell Differ.* 20:125-162.)

Methods which are well known to those skilled in the art may be used to construct expression vectors containing sequences encoding APRG and appropriate transcriptional and translational control elements. These methods include *in vitro* recombinant DNA techniques, synthetic techniques, and *in vivo* genetic recombination. (See, e.g., Sambrook, J. et al. (1989) Molecular Cloning, A Laboratory Manual, Cold Spring Harbor Press, Plainview NY, ch. 4, 8, and 16-17; Ausubel, F.M. et al. (1995) Current Protocols in Molecular Biology, John Wiley & Sons, New York NY, ch. 9, 13, and 16.)

A variety of expression vector/host systems may be utilized to contain and express sequences encoding APRG. These include, but are not limited to, microorganisms such as bacteria transformed with recombinant bacteriophage, plasmid, or cosmid DNA expression vectors; yeast transformed with yeast expression vectors; insect cell systems infected with viral expression vectors (e.g., baculovirus); plant cell systems transformed with viral expression vectors (e.g., cauliflower mosaic virus, CaMV, or tobacco mosaic virus, TMV) or with bacterial expression vectors (e.g., Ti or pBR322 plasmids); or animal cell systems. (See, e.g., Sambrook, *supra*; Ausubel, *supra*; Van Heeke, G. and S.M. Schuster (1989) *J. Biol. Chem.* 264:5503-5509; Engelhard, E.K. et al. (1994) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 91:3224-3227; Sandig, V. et al. (1996) *Hum. Gene Ther.* 7:1937-1945; Takamatsu, N. (1987) *EMBO*

J. 6:307-311; The McGraw Hill Yearbook of Science and Technology (1992) McGraw Hill, New York NY, pp. 191-196; Logan, J. and T. Shenk (1984) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 81:3655-3659; and Harrington, J.J. et al. (1997) *Nat. Genet.* 15:345-355.) Expression vectors derived from retroviruses, adenoviruses, or herpes or vaccinia viruses, or from various bacterial plasmids, may be used for
5 delivery of nucleotide sequences to the targeted organ, tissue, or cell population. (See, e.g., Di Nicola, M. et al. (1998) *Cancer Gen. Ther.* 5(6):350-356; Yu, M. et al. (1993) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 90(13):6340-6344; Buller, R.M. et al. (1985) *Nature* 317(6040):813-815; McGregor, D.P. et al. (1994) *Mol. Immunol.* 31(3):219-226; and Verma, I.M. and N. Somia (1997) *Nature* 389:239-242.)
The invention is not limited by the host cell employed.

10 In bacterial systems, a number of cloning and expression vectors may be selected depending upon the use intended for polynucleotide sequences encoding APRG. For example, routine cloning, subcloning, and propagation of polynucleotide sequences encoding APRG can be achieved using a multifunctional E. coli vector such as PBLUESCRIPT (Stratagene, La Jolla CA) or PSPORT1 plasmid (Life Technologies). Ligation of sequences encoding APRG into the vector's multiple cloning site
15 disrupts the *lacZ* gene, allowing a colorimetric screening procedure for identification of transformed bacteria containing recombinant molecules. In addition, these vectors may be useful for in vitro transcription, dideoxy sequencing, single strand rescue with helper phage, and creation of nested deletions in the cloned sequence. (See, e.g., Van Heeke, G. and S.M. Schuster (1989) *J. Biol. Chem.* 264:5503-5509.) When large quantities of APRG are needed, e.g. for the production of antibodies,
20 vectors which direct high level expression of APRG may be used. For example, vectors containing the strong, inducible SP6 or T7 bacteriophage promoter may be used.

Yeast expression systems may be used for production of APRG. A number of vectors containing constitutive or inducible promoters, such as alpha factor, alcohol oxidase, and PGH promoters, may be used in the yeast Saccharomyces cerevisiae or Pichia pastoris. In addition, such
25 vectors direct either the secretion or intracellular retention of expressed proteins and enable integration of foreign sequences into the host genome for stable propagation. (See, e.g., Ausubel, 1995, supra: Bitter, G.A. et al. (1987) *Methods Enzymol.* 153:516-544; and Scorer, C.A. et al. (1994) *Bio/Technology* 12:181-184.)

Plant systems may also be used for expression of APRG. Transcription of sequences encoding
30 APRG may be driven by viral promoters, e.g., the 35S and 19S promoters of CaMV used alone or in combination with the omega leader sequence from TMV (Takamatsu, N. (1987) *EMBO J.* 6:307-311). Alternatively, plant promoters such as the small subunit of RUBISCO or heat shock promoters may be used. (See, e.g., Coruzzi, G. et al. (1984) *EMBO J.* 3:1671-1680; Broglie, R. et al. (1984) *Science* 224:838-843; and Winter, J. et al. (1991) *Results Probl. Cell Differ.* 17:85-105.) These constructs can

be introduced into plant cells by direct DNA transformation or pathogen-mediated transfection. (See, e.g., The McGraw Hill Yearbook of Science and Technology (1992) McGraw Hill, New York NY, pp. 191-196.)

In mammalian cells, a number of viral-based expression systems may be utilized. In cases
5 where an adenovirus is used as an expression vector, sequences encoding APRG may be ligated into an adenovirus transcription/translation complex consisting of the late promoter and tripartite leader sequence. Insertion in a non-essential E1 or E3 region of the viral genome may be used to obtain infective virus which expresses APRG in host cells. (See, e.g., Logan, J. and T. Shenk (1984) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 81:3655-3659.) In addition, transcription enhancers, such as the Rous sarcoma
10 virus (RSV) enhancer, may be used to increase expression in mammalian host cells. SV40 or EBV-based vectors may also be used for high-level protein expression.

Human artificial chromosomes (HACs) may also be employed to deliver larger fragments of DNA than can be contained in and expressed from a plasmid. HACs of about 6 kb to 10 Mb are constructed and delivered via conventional delivery methods (liposomes, polycationic amino polymers,
15 or vesicles) for therapeutic purposes. (See, e.g., Harrington, J.J. et al. (1997) Nat. Genet. 15:345-355.)

For long term production of recombinant proteins in mammalian systems, stable expression of APRG in cell lines is preferred. For example, sequences encoding APRG can be transformed into cell lines using expression vectors which may contain viral origins of replication and/or endogenous expression elements and a selectable marker gene on the same or on a separate vector. Following the
20 introduction of the vector, cells may be allowed to grow for about 1 to 2 days in enriched media before being switched to selective media. The purpose of the selectable marker is to confer resistance to a selective agent, and its presence allows growth and recovery of cells which successfully express the introduced sequences. Resistant clones of stably transformed cells may be propagated using tissue culture techniques appropriate to the cell type.

Any number of selection systems may be used to recover transformed cell lines. These include,
25 but are not limited to, the herpes simplex virus thymidine kinase and adenine phosphoribosyltransferase genes, for use in *tk*⁻ and *apr*⁻ cells, respectively. (See, e.g., Wigler, M. et al. (1977) Cell 11:223-232; Lowy, I. et al. (1980) Cell 22:817-823.) Also, antimetabolite, antibiotic, or herbicide resistance can be used as the basis for selection. For example, *dhfr* confers resistance to methotrexate; *neo* confers
30 resistance to the aminoglycosides neomycin and G-418; and *als* and *pat* confer resistance to chlorsulfuron and phosphinotricin acetyltransferase, respectively. (See, e.g., Wigler, M. et al. (1980) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 77:3567-3570; Colbere-Garapin, F. et al. (1981) J. Mol. Biol. 150:1-14.) Additional selectable genes have been described, e.g., *trpB* and *hisD*, which alter cellular requirements for metabolites. (See, e.g., Hartman, S.C. and R.C. Mulligan (1988) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA

85:8047-8051.) Visible markers, e.g., anthocyanins, green fluorescent proteins (GFP; Clontech), β glucuronidase and its substrate β -glucuronide, or luciferase and its substrate luciferin may be used. These markers can be used not only to identify transformants, but also to quantify the amount of transient or stable protein expression attributable to a specific vector system. (See, e.g., Rhodes, C.A. 5 (1995) *Methods Mol. Biol.* 55:121-131.)

Although the presence/absence of marker gene expression suggests that the gene of interest is also present, the presence and expression of the gene may need to be confirmed. For example, if the sequence encoding APRG is inserted within a marker gene sequence, transformed cells containing sequences encoding APRG can be identified by the absence of marker gene function. Alternatively, a 10 marker gene can be placed in tandem with a sequence encoding APRG under the control of a single promoter. Expression of the marker gene in response to induction or selection usually indicates expression of the tandem gene as well.

In general, host cells that contain the nucleic acid sequence encoding APRG and that express APRG may be identified by a variety of procedures known to those of skill in the art. These procedures 15 include, but are not limited to, DNA-DNA or DNA-RNA hybridizations, PCR amplification, and protein bioassay or immunoassay techniques which include membrane, solution, or chip based technologies for the detection and/or quantification of nucleic acid or protein sequences.

Immunological methods for detecting and measuring the expression of APRG using either specific polyclonal or monoclonal antibodies are known in the art. Examples of such techniques include 20 enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays (ELISAs), radioimmunoassays (RIAs), and fluorescence activated cell sorting (FACS). A two-site, monoclonal-based immunoassay utilizing monoclonal antibodies reactive to two non-interfering epitopes on APRG is preferred, but a competitive binding assay may be employed. These and other assays are well known in the art. (See, e.g., Hampton, R. et al. (1990) Serological Methods, a Laboratory Manual, APS Press, St. Paul MN, Sect. IV; Coligan, J.E. 25 et al. (1997) Current Protocols in Immunology, Greene Pub. Associates and Wiley-Interscience, New York NY; and Pound, J.D. (1998) Immunochemical Protocols, Humana Press, Totowa NJ.)

A wide variety of labels and conjugation techniques are known by those skilled in the art and may be used in various nucleic acid and amino acid assays. Means for producing labeled hybridization or PCR probes for detecting sequences related to polynucleotides encoding APRG include oligolabeling, 30 nick translation, end-labeling, or PCR amplification using a labeled nucleotide. Alternatively, the sequences encoding APRG, or any fragments thereof, may be cloned into a vector for the production of an mRNA probe. Such vectors are known in the art, are commercially available, and may be used to synthesize RNA probes in vitro by addition of an appropriate RNA polymerase such as T7, T3, or SP6 and labeled nucleotides. These procedures may be conducted using a variety of commercially available

kits, such as those provided by Amersham Pharmacia Biotech, Promega (Madison WI), and US Biochemical. Suitable reporter molecules or labels which may be used for ease of detection include radionuclides, enzymes, fluorescent, chemiluminescent, or chromogenic agents, as well as substrates, cofactors, inhibitors, magnetic particles, and the like.

5 Host cells transformed with nucleotide sequences encoding APRG may be cultured under conditions suitable for the expression and recovery of the protein from cell culture. The protein produced by a transformed cell may be secreted or retained intracellularly depending on the sequence and/or the vector used. As will be understood by those of skill in the art, expression vectors containing polynucleotides which encode APRG may be designed to contain signal sequences which direct
10 secretion of APRG through a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell membrane.

 In addition, a host cell strain may be chosen for its ability to modulate expression of the inserted sequences or to process the expressed protein in the desired fashion. Such modifications of the polypeptide include, but are not limited to, acetylation, carboxylation, glycosylation, phosphorylation, lipidation, and acylation. Post-translational processing which cleaves a "prepro" or "pro" form of the
15 protein may also be used to specify protein targeting, folding, and/or activity. Different host cells which have specific cellular machinery and characteristic mechanisms for post-translational activities (e.g., CHO, HeLa, MDCK, HEK293, and WI38) are available from the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC, Manassas VA) and may be chosen to ensure the correct modification and processing of the foreign protein.

20 In another embodiment of the invention, natural, modified, or recombinant nucleic acid sequences encoding APRG may be ligated to a heterologous sequence resulting in translation of a fusion protein in any of the aforementioned host systems. For example, a chimeric APRG protein containing a heterologous moiety that can be recognized by a commercially available antibody may facilitate the screening of peptide libraries for inhibitors of APRG activity. Heterologous protein and peptide
25 moieties may also facilitate purification of fusion proteins using commercially available affinity matrices. Such moieties include, but are not limited to, glutathione S-transferase (GST), maltose binding protein (MBP), thioredoxin (Trx), calmodulin binding peptide (CBP), 6-His, FLAG, *c-myc*, and hemagglutinin (HA). GST, MBP, Trx, CBP, and 6-His enable purification of their cognate fusion proteins on immobilized glutathione, maltose, phenylarsine oxide, calmodulin, and metal-chelate resins,
30 respectively. FLAG, *c-myc*, and hemagglutinin (HA) enable immunoaffinity purification of fusion proteins using commercially available monoclonal and polyclonal antibodies that specifically recognize these epitope tags. A fusion protein may also be engineered to contain a proteolytic cleavage site located between the APRG encoding sequence and the heterologous protein sequence, so that APRG may be cleaved away from the heterologous moiety following purification. Methods for fusion protein

expression and purification are discussed in Ausubel (1995, supra, ch. 10). A variety of commercially available kits may also be used to facilitate expression and purification of fusion proteins.

In a further embodiment of the invention, synthesis of radiolabeled APRG may be achieved in vitro using the TNT rabbit reticulocyte lysate or wheat germ extract system (Promega). These systems
5 couple transcription and translation of protein-coding sequences operably associated with the T7, T3, or SP6 promoters. Translation takes place in the presence of a radiolabeled amino acid precursor, for example, ³⁵S-methionine.

APRG of the present invention or fragments thereof may be used to screen for compounds that specifically bind to APRG. At least one and up to a plurality of test compounds may be screened
10 for specific binding to APRG. Examples of test compounds include antibodies, oligonucleotides, proteins (e.g., receptors), or small molecules.

In one embodiment, the compound thus identified is closely related to the natural ligand of APRG, e.g., a ligand or fragment thereof, a natural substrate, a structural or functional mimetic, or a natural binding partner. (See, e.g., Coligan, J.E. et al. (1991) Current Protocols in Immunology 1(2):
15 Chapter 5.) Similarly, the compound can be closely related to the natural receptor to which APRG binds, or to at least a fragment of the receptor, e.g., the ligand binding site. In either case, the compound can be rationally designed using known techniques. In one embodiment, screening for these compounds involves producing appropriate cells which express APRG, either as a secreted protein or on the cell membrane. Preferred cells include cells from mammals, yeast, Drosophila, or E.
20 coli. Cells expressing APRG or cell membrane fractions which contain APRG are then contacted with a test compound and binding, stimulation, or inhibition of activity of either APRG or the compound is analyzed.

An assay may simply test binding of a test compound to the polypeptide, wherein binding is detected by a fluorophore, radioisotope, enzyme conjugate, or other detectable label. For example,
25 the assay may comprise the steps of combining at least one test compound with APRG, either in solution or affixed to a solid support, and detecting the binding of APRG to the compound. Alternatively, the assay may detect or measure binding of a test compound in the presence of a labeled competitor. Additionally, the assay may be carried out using cell-free preparations, chemical libraries, or natural product mixtures, and the test compound(s) may be free in solution or affixed to a
30 solid support.

APRG of the present invention or fragments thereof may be used to screen for compounds that modulate the activity of APRG. Such compounds may include agonists, antagonists, or partial or inverse agonists. In one embodiment, an assay is performed under conditions permissive for APRG activity, wherein APRG is combined with at least one test compound, and the activity of APRG in the
35 presence of a test compound is compared with the activity of APRG in the absence of the test

compound. A change in the activity of APRG in the presence of the test compound is indicative of a compound that modulates the activity of APRG. Alternatively, a test compound is combined with an in vitro or cell-free system comprising APRG under conditions suitable for APRG activity, and the assay is performed. In either of these assays, a test compound which modulates the activity of APRG
5 may do so indirectly and need not come in direct contact with the test compound. At least one and up to a plurality of test compounds may be screened.

In another embodiment, polynucleotides encoding APRG or their mammalian homologs may be “knocked out” in an animal model system using homologous recombination in embryonic stem (ES) cells. Such techniques are well known in the art and are useful for the generation of animal models of
10 human disease. (See, e.g., U.S. Patent Number 5,175,383 and U.S. Patent Number 5,767,337.) For example, mouse ES cells, such as the mouse 129/SvJ cell line, are derived from the early mouse embryo and grown in culture. The ES cells are transformed with a vector containing the gene of interest disrupted by a marker gene, e.g., the neomycin phosphotransferase gene (neo; Capecchi, M.R. (1989) Science 244:1288-1292). The vector integrates into the corresponding region of the host genome by
15 homologous recombination. Alternatively, homologous recombination takes place using the Cre-loxP system to knockout a gene of interest in a tissue- or developmental stage-specific manner (Marth, J.D. (1996) Clin. Invest. 97:1999-2002; Wagner, K.U. et al. (1997) Nucleic Acids Res. 25:4323-4330). Transformed ES cells are identified and microinjected into mouse cell blastocysts such as those from the C57BL/6 mouse strain. The blastocysts are surgically transferred to pseudopregnant dams, and the
20 resulting chimeric progeny are genotyped and bred to produce heterozygous or homozygous strains. Transgenic animals thus generated may be tested with potential therapeutic or toxic agents.

Polynucleotides encoding APRG may also be manipulated in vitro in ES cells derived from human blastocysts. Human ES cells have the potential to differentiate into at least eight separate cell lineages including endoderm, mesoderm, and ectodermal cell types. These cell lineages differentiate
25 into, for example, neural cells, hematopoietic lineages, and cardiomyocytes (Thomson, J.A. et al. (1998) Science 282:1145-1147).

Polynucleotides encoding APRG can also be used to create “knockin” humanized animals (pigs) or transgenic animals (mice or rats) to model human disease. With knockin technology, a region of a polynucleotide encoding APRG is injected into animal ES cells, and the injected sequence
30 integrates into the animal cell genome. Transformed cells are injected into blastulae, and the blastulae are implanted as described above. Transgenic progeny or inbred lines are studied and treated with potential pharmaceutical agents to obtain information on treatment of a human disease. Alternatively, a mammal inbred to overexpress APRG, e.g., by secreting APRG in its milk, may also serve as a convenient source of that protein (Janne, J. et al. (1998) Biotechnol. Annu. Rev. 4:55-74).

THERAPEUTICS

Chemical and structural similarity, e.g., in the context of sequences and motifs, exists between regions of APRG and apoptosis regulators. In addition, the expression of APRG is closely associated with cancerous tissue. Therefore, APRG appears to play a role in cell proliferative, immunological, and reproductive disorders. In the treatment of disorders associated with increased APRG expression or activity, it is desirable to decrease the expression or activity of APRG. In the treatment of disorders associated with decreased APRG expression or activity, it is desirable to increase the expression or activity of APRG.

Therefore, in one embodiment, APRG or a fragment or derivative thereof may be administered to a subject to treat or prevent a disorder associated with decreased expression or activity of APRG. Examples of such disorders include, but are not limited to, a cell proliferative disorder such as actinic keratosis, arteriosclerosis, atherosclerosis, bursitis, cirrhosis, hepatitis, mixed connective tissue disease (MCTD), myelofibrosis, paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria, polycythemia vera, psoriasis, primary thrombocythemia, and cancers including adenocarcinoma, leukemia, lymphoma, melanoma, myeloma, sarcoma, teratocarcinoma, and, in particular, a cancer of the adrenal gland, bladder, bone, bone marrow, brain, breast, cervix, gall bladder, ganglia, gastrointestinal tract, heart, kidney, liver, lung, muscle, ovary, pancreas, parathyroid, penis, prostate, salivary glands, skin, spleen, testis, thymus, thyroid, and uterus; an immunological disorder such as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), Addison's disease, adult respiratory distress syndrome, allergies, ankylosing spondylitis, amyloidosis, anemia, asthma, atherosclerosis, autoimmune hemolytic anemia, autoimmune thyroiditis, autoimmune polyendocrinopathy-candidiasis-ectodermal dystrophy (APECED), bronchitis, cholecystitis, contact dermatitis, Crohn's disease, atopic dermatitis, dermatomyositis, diabetes mellitus, emphysema, episodic lymphopenia with lymphocytotoxins, erythroblastosis fetalis, erythema nodosum, atrophic gastritis, glomerulonephritis, Goodpasture's syndrome, gout, Graves' disease, Hashimoto's thyroiditis, hypereosinophilia, irritable bowel syndrome, multiple sclerosis, myasthenia gravis, myocardial or pericardial inflammation, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, pancreatitis, polymyositis, psoriasis, Reiter's syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, Sjögren's syndrome, systemic anaphylaxis, systemic lupus erythematosus, systemic sclerosis, thrombocytopenic purpura, ulcerative colitis, uveitis, Werner syndrome, a complication of cancer, hemodialysis, and extracorporeal circulation, viral, bacterial, fungal, parasitic, protozoal, and helminthic infections, and trauma; and a reproductive disorder such as a disorder of prolactin production, infertility, including tubal disease, ovulatory defects, and endometriosis, a disruption of the estrous cycle, a disruption of the menstrual cycle, polycystic ovary syndrome, ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome, endometrial and ovarian tumors, uterine fibroids, autoimmune disorders, ectopic pregnancies, and teratogenesis; cancer of the breast, fibrocystic breast

disease, and galactorrhea; disruptions of spermatogenesis, abnormal sperm physiology, cancer of the testis, cancer of the prostate, benign prostatic hyperplasia, prostatitis, Peyronie's disease, impotence, carcinoma of the male breast, and gynecomastia.

In another embodiment, a vector capable of expressing APRG or a fragment or derivative thereof may be administered to a subject to treat or prevent a disorder associated with decreased expression or activity of APRG including, but not limited to, those described above.

In a further embodiment, a composition comprising a substantially purified APRG in conjunction with a suitable pharmaceutical carrier may be administered to a subject to treat or prevent a disorder associated with decreased expression or activity of APRG including, but not limited to, those provided above.

In still another embodiment, an agonist which modulates the activity of APRG may be administered to a subject to treat or prevent a disorder associated with decreased expression or activity of APRG including, but not limited to, those listed above.

In a further embodiment, an antagonist of APRG may be administered to a subject to treat or prevent a disorder associated with increased expression or activity of APRG. Examples of such disorders include, but are not limited to, those cell proliferative, immunological, and reproductive disorders described above. In one aspect, an antibody which specifically binds APRG may be used directly as an antagonist or indirectly as a targeting or delivery mechanism for bringing a pharmaceutical agent to cells or tissues which express APRG.

In an additional embodiment, a vector expressing the complement of the polynucleotide encoding APRG may be administered to a subject to treat or prevent a disorder associated with increased expression or activity of APRG including, but not limited to, those described above.

In other embodiments, any of the proteins, antagonists, antibodies, agonists, complementary sequences, or vectors of the invention may be administered in combination with other appropriate therapeutic agents. Selection of the appropriate agents for use in combination therapy may be made by one of ordinary skill in the art, according to conventional pharmaceutical principles. The combination of therapeutic agents may act synergistically to effect the treatment or prevention of the various disorders described above. Using this approach, one may be able to achieve therapeutic efficacy with lower dosages of each agent, thus reducing the potential for adverse side effects.

An antagonist of APRG may be produced using methods which are generally known in the art. In particular, purified APRG may be used to produce antibodies or to screen libraries of pharmaceutical agents to identify those which specifically bind APRG. Antibodies to APRG may also be generated using methods that are well known in the art. Such antibodies may include, but are not limited to, polyclonal, monoclonal, chimeric, and single chain antibodies, Fab fragments, and fragments produced

by a Fab expression library. Neutralizing antibodies (i.e., those which inhibit dimer formation) are generally preferred for therapeutic use.

For the production of antibodies, various hosts including goats, rabbits, rats, mice, humans, and others may be immunized by injection with APRG or with any fragment or oligopeptide thereof which has immunogenic properties. Depending on the host species, various adjuvants may be used to increase immunological response. Such adjuvants include, but are not limited to, Freund's, mineral gels such as aluminum hydroxide, and surface active substances such as lysolecithin, pluronic polyols, polyanions, peptides, oil emulsions, KLH, and dinitrophenol. Among adjuvants used in humans, BCG (bacilli Calmette-Guerin) and Corynebacterium parvum are especially preferable.

It is preferred that the oligopeptides, peptides, or fragments used to induce antibodies to APRG have an amino acid sequence consisting of at least about 5 amino acids, and generally will consist of at least about 10 amino acids. It is also preferable that these oligopeptides, peptides, or fragments are identical to a portion of the amino acid sequence of the natural protein. Short stretches of APRG amino acids may be fused with those of another protein, such as KLH, and antibodies to the chimeric molecule may be produced.

Monoclonal antibodies to APRG may be prepared using any technique which provides for the production of antibody molecules by continuous cell lines in culture. These include, but are not limited to, the hybridoma technique, the human B-cell hybridoma technique, and the EBV-hybridoma technique. (See, e.g., Kohler, G. et al. (1975) Nature 256:495-497; Kozbor, D. et al. (1985) J. Immunol. Methods 81:31-42; Cote, R.J. et al. (1983) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 80:2026-2030; and Cole, S.P. et al. (1984) Mol. Cell Biol. 62:109-120.)

In addition, techniques developed for the production of "chimeric antibodies," such as the splicing of mouse antibody genes to human antibody genes to obtain a molecule with appropriate antigen specificity and biological activity, can be used. (See, e.g., Morrison, S.L. et al. (1984) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 81:6851-6855; Neuberger, M.S. et al. (1984) Nature 312:604-608; and Takeda, S. et al. (1985) Nature 314:452-454.) Alternatively, techniques described for the production of single chain antibodies may be adapted, using methods known in the art, to produce APRG-specific single chain antibodies. Antibodies with related specificity, but of distinct idiotypic composition, may be generated by chain shuffling from random combinatorial immunoglobulin libraries. (See, e.g., Burton, D.R. (1991) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 88:10134-10137.)

Antibodies may also be produced by inducing in vivo production in the lymphocyte population or by screening immunoglobulin libraries or panels of highly specific binding reagents as disclosed in the literature. (See, e.g., Orlandi, R. et al. (1989) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 86:3833-3837; Winter, G. et al. (1991) Nature 349:293-299.)

Antibody fragments which contain specific binding sites for APRG may also be generated. For example, such fragments include, but are not limited to, $F(ab')_2$ fragments produced by pepsin digestion of the antibody molecule and Fab fragments generated by reducing the disulfide bridges of the $F(ab')_2$ fragments. Alternatively, Fab expression libraries may be constructed to allow rapid and easy
5 identification of monoclonal Fab fragments with the desired specificity. (See, e.g., Huse, W.D. et al. (1989) Science 246:1275-1281.)

Various immunoassays may be used for screening to identify antibodies having the desired specificity. Numerous protocols for competitive binding or immunoradiometric assays using either polyclonal or monoclonal antibodies with established specificities are well known in the art. Such
10 immunoassays typically involve the measurement of complex formation between APRG and its specific antibody. A two-site, monoclonal-based immunoassay utilizing monoclonal antibodies reactive to two non-interfering APRG epitopes is generally used, but a competitive binding assay may also be employed (Pound, supra).

Various methods such as Scatchard analysis in conjunction with radioimmunoassay techniques
15 may be used to assess the affinity of antibodies for APRG. Affinity is expressed as an association constant, K_a , which is defined as the molar concentration of APRG-antibody complex divided by the molar concentrations of free antigen and free antibody under equilibrium conditions. The K_a determined for a preparation of polyclonal antibodies, which are heterogeneous in their affinities for multiple APRG epitopes, represents the average affinity, or avidity, of the antibodies for APRG. The K_a
20 determined for a preparation of monoclonal antibodies, which are monospecific for a particular APRG epitope, represents a true measure of affinity. High-affinity antibody preparations with K_a ranging from about 10^9 to 10^{12} L/mole are preferred for use in immunoassays in which the APRG-antibody complex must withstand rigorous manipulations. Low-affinity antibody preparations with K_a ranging from about 10^6 to 10^7 L/mole are preferred for use in immunopurification and similar procedures which
25 ultimately require dissociation of APRG, preferably in active form, from the antibody (Catty, D. (1988) Antibodies, Volume I: A Practical Approach, IRL Press, Washington DC; Liddell, J.E. and A. Cryer (1991) A Practical Guide to Monoclonal Antibodies, John Wiley & Sons, New York NY).

The titer and avidity of polyclonal antibody preparations may be further evaluated to determine the quality and suitability of such preparations for certain downstream applications. For example, a
30 polyclonal antibody preparation containing at least 1-2 mg specific antibody/ml, preferably 5-10 mg specific antibody/ml, is generally employed in procedures requiring precipitation of APRG-antibody complexes. Procedures for evaluating antibody specificity, titer, and avidity, and guidelines for antibody quality and usage in various applications, are generally available. (See, e.g., Catty, supra, and Coligan et al. supra.)

In another embodiment of the invention, the polynucleotides encoding APRG, or any fragment or complement thereof, may be used for therapeutic purposes. In one aspect, modifications of gene expression can be achieved by designing complementary sequences or antisense molecules (DNA, RNA, PNA, or modified oligonucleotides) to the coding or regulatory regions of the gene encoding APRG.

5 Such technology is well known in the art, and antisense oligonucleotides or larger fragments can be designed from various locations along the coding or control regions of sequences encoding APRG. (See, e.g., Agrawal, S., ed. (1996) Antisense Therapeutics, Humana Press Inc., Totawa NJ.)

In therapeutic use, any gene delivery system suitable for introduction of the antisense sequences into appropriate target cells can be used. Antisense sequences can be delivered

10 intracellularly in the form of an expression plasmid which, upon transcription, produces a sequence complementary to at least a portion of the cellular sequence encoding the target protein. (See, e.g., Slater, J.E. et al. (1998) *J. Allergy Clin. Immunol.* 102(3):469-475; and Scanlon, K.J. et al. (1995) 9(13):1288-1296.) Antisense sequences can also be introduced intracellularly through the use of viral vectors, such as retrovirus and adeno-associated virus vectors. (See, e.g., Miller, A.D. (1990) *Blood*

15 76:271; Ausubel, supra; Uckert, W. and W. Walther (1994) *Pharmacol. Ther.* 63(3):323-347.) Other gene delivery mechanisms include liposome-derived systems, artificial viral envelopes, and other systems known in the art. (See, e.g., Rossi, J.J. (1995) *Br. Med. Bull.* 51(1):217-225; Boado, R.J. et al. (1998) *J. Pharm. Sci.* 87(11):1308-1315; and Morris, M.C. et al. (1997) *Nucleic Acids Res.* 25(14):2730-2736.)

20 In another embodiment of the invention, polynucleotides encoding APRG may be used for somatic or germline gene therapy. Gene therapy may be performed to (i) correct a genetic deficiency (e.g., in the cases of severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID)-X1 disease characterized by X-linked inheritance (Cavazzana-Calvo, M. et al. (2000) *Science* 288:669-672), severe combined immunodeficiency syndrome associated with an inherited adenosine deaminase (ADA) deficiency

25 (Blaese, R.M. et al. (1995) *Science* 270:475-480; Bordignon, C. et al. (1995) *Science* 270:470-475), cystic fibrosis (Zabner, J. et al. (1993) *Cell* 75:207-216; Crystal, R.G. et al. (1995) *Hum. Gene Therapy* 6:643-666; Crystal, R.G. et al. (1995) *Hum. Gene Therapy* 6:667-703), thalassemias, familial hypercholesterolemia, and hemophilia resulting from Factor VIII or Factor IX deficiencies (Crystal, R.G. (1995) *Science* 270:404-410; Verma, I.M. and N. Somia (1997) *Nature* 389:239-242)), (ii)

30 express a conditionally lethal gene product (e.g., in the case of cancers which result from unregulated cell proliferation), or (iii) express a protein which affords protection against intracellular parasites (e.g., against human retroviruses, such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) (Baltimore, D. (1988) *Nature* 335:395-396; Poeschla, E. et al. (1996) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA.* 93:11395-11399), hepatitis B or C virus (HBV, HCV); fungal parasites, such as Candida albicans and Paracoccidioides

brasiliensis; and protozoan parasites such as Plasmodium falciparum and Trypanosoma cruzi). In the case where a genetic deficiency in APRG expression or regulation causes disease, the expression of APRG from an appropriate population of transduced cells may alleviate the clinical manifestations caused by the genetic deficiency.

5 In a further embodiment of the invention, diseases or disorders caused by deficiencies in APRG are treated by constructing mammalian expression vectors encoding APRG and introducing these vectors by mechanical means into APRG-deficient cells. Mechanical transfer technologies for use with cells in vivo or ex vitro include (i) direct DNA microinjection into individual cells, (ii) ballistic gold particle delivery, (iii) liposome-mediated transfection, (iv) receptor-mediated gene transfer, and (v) the use of DNA transposons (Morgan, R.A. and W.F. Anderson (1993) *Annu. Rev. Biochem.* 62:191-217; Ivics, Z. (1997) *Cell* 91:501-510; Boulay, J-L. and H. Récipon (1998) *Curr. Opin. Biotechnol.* 9:445-450).

Expression vectors that may be effective for the expression of APRG include, but are not limited to, the PCDNA 3.1, EPITAG, PRCCMV2, PREP, PVAX vectors (Invitrogen, Carlsbad CA),
15 PCMV-SCRIPT, PCMV-TAG, PEGSH/PERV (Stratagene, La Jolla CA), and PTET-OFF, PTET-ON, PTRE2, PTRE2-LUC, PTK-HYG (Clontech, Palo Alto CA). APRG may be expressed using (i) a constitutively active promoter, (e.g., from cytomegalovirus (CMV), Rous sarcoma virus (RSV), SV40 virus, thymidine kinase (TK), or β -actin genes), (ii) an inducible promoter (e.g., the tetracycline-regulated promoter (Gossen, M. and H. Bujard (1992) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 89:5547-5551; Gossen, M. et al. (1995) *Science* 268:1766-1769; Rossi, F.M.V. and H.M. Blau (1998) *Curr. Opin. Biotechnol.* 9:451-456), commercially available in the T-REX plasmid (Invitrogen)); the ecdysone-inducible promoter (available in the plasmids PVGRXR and PIND; Invitrogen); the FK506/rapamycin inducible promoter; or the RU486/mifepristone inducible promoter (Rossi, F.M.V. and Blau, H.M. supra), or (iii) a tissue-specific promoter or the native promoter of the endogenous
25 gene encoding APRG from a normal individual.

Commercially available liposome transformation kits (e.g., the PERFECT LIPID TRANSFECTION KIT, available from Invitrogen) allow one with ordinary skill in the art to deliver polynucleotides to target cells in culture and require minimal effort to optimize experimental parameters. In the alternative, transformation is performed using the calcium phosphate method
30 (Graham, F.L. and A.J. Eb (1973) *Virology* 52:456-467), or by electroporation (Neumann, E. et al. (1982) *EMBO J.* 1:841-845). The introduction of DNA to primary cells requires modification of these standardized mammalian transfection protocols.

In another embodiment of the invention, diseases or disorders caused by genetic defects with respect to APRG expression are treated by constructing a retrovirus vector consisting of (i) the

polynucleotide encoding APRG under the control of an independent promoter or the retrovirus long terminal repeat (LTR) promoter, (ii) appropriate RNA packaging signals, and (iii) a Rev-responsive element (RRE) along with additional retrovirus *cis*-acting RNA sequences and coding sequences required for efficient vector propagation. Retrovirus vectors (e.g., PFB and PFBNEO) are commercially available (Stratagene) and are based on published data (Riviere, I. et al. (1995) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 92:6733-6737), incorporated by reference herein. The vector is propagated in an appropriate vector producing cell line (VPCL) that expresses an envelope gene with a tropism for receptors on the target cells or a promiscuous envelope protein such as VSVg (Armentano, D. et al. (1987) J. Virol. 61:1647-1650; Bender, M.A. et al. (1987) J. Virol. 61:1639-1646; Adam, M.A. and A.D. Miller (1988) J. Virol. 62:3802-3806; Dull, T. et al. (1998) J. Virol. 72:8463-8471; Zufferey, R. et al. (1998) J. Virol. 72:9873-9880). U.S. Patent Number 5,910,434 to Rigg ("Method for obtaining retrovirus packaging cell lines producing high transducing efficiency retroviral supernatant") discloses a method for obtaining retrovirus packaging cell lines and is hereby incorporated by reference. Propagation of retrovirus vectors, transduction of a population of cells (e.g., CD4⁺ T-cells), and the return of transduced cells to a patient are procedures well known to persons skilled in the art of gene therapy and have been well documented (Ranga, U. et al. (1997) J. Virol. 71:7020-7029; Bauer, G. et al. (1997) Blood 89:2259-2267; Bonyhadi, M.L. (1997) J. Virol. 71:4707-4716; Ranga, U. et al. (1998) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 95:1201-1206; Su, L. (1997) Blood 89:2283-2290).

In the alternative, an adenovirus-based gene therapy delivery system is used to deliver polynucleotides encoding APRG to cells which have one or more genetic abnormalities with respect to the expression of APRG. The construction and packaging of adenovirus-based vectors are well known to those with ordinary skill in the art. Replication defective adenovirus vectors have proven to be versatile for importing genes encoding immunoregulatory proteins into intact islets in the pancreas (Csete, M.E. et al. (1995) Transplantation 27:263-268). Potentially useful adenoviral vectors are described in U.S. Patent Number 5,707,618 to Armentano ("Adenovirus vectors for gene therapy"), hereby incorporated by reference. For adenoviral vectors, see also Antinozzi, P.A. et al. (1999) Annu. Rev. Nutr. 19:511-544 and Verma, I.M. and N. Somia (1997) Nature 18:389:239-242, both incorporated by reference herein.

In another alternative, a herpes-based, gene therapy delivery system is used to deliver polynucleotides encoding APRG to target cells which have one or more genetic abnormalities with respect to the expression of APRG. The use of herpes simplex virus (HSV)-based vectors may be especially valuable for introducing APRG to cells of the central nervous system, for which HSV has a tropism. The construction and packaging of herpes-based vectors are well known to those with ordinary skill in the art. A replication-competent herpes simplex virus (HSV) type 1-based vector has

been used to deliver a reporter gene to the eyes of primates (Liu, X. et al. (1999) Exp. Eye Res. 169:385-395). The construction of a HSV-1 virus vector has also been disclosed in detail in U.S. Patent Number 5,804,413 to DeLuca ("Herpes simplex virus strains for gene transfer"), which is hereby incorporated by reference. U.S. Patent Number 5,804,413 teaches the use of recombinant HSV d92 which consists of a genome containing at least one exogenous gene to be transferred to a cell under the control of the appropriate promoter for purposes including human gene therapy. Also taught by this patent are the construction and use of recombinant HSV strains deleted for ICP4, ICP27 and ICP22. For HSV vectors, see also Goins, W.F. et al. (1999) J. Virol. 73:519-532 and Xu, H. et al. (1994) Dev. Biol. 163:152-161, hereby incorporated by reference. The manipulation of cloned herpesvirus sequences, the generation of recombinant virus following the transfection of multiple plasmids containing different segments of the large herpesvirus genomes, the growth and propagation of herpesvirus, and the infection of cells with herpesvirus are techniques well known to those of ordinary skill in the art.

In another alternative, an alphavirus (positive, single-stranded RNA virus) vector is used to deliver polynucleotides encoding APRG to target cells. The biology of the prototypic alphavirus, Semliki Forest Virus (SFV), has been studied extensively and gene transfer vectors have been based on the SFV genome (Garoff, H. and K.-J. Li (1998) Curr. Opin. Biotechnol. 9:464-469). During alphavirus RNA replication, a subgenomic RNA is generated that normally encodes the viral capsid proteins. This subgenomic RNA replicates to higher levels than the full length genomic RNA, resulting in the overproduction of capsid proteins relative to the viral proteins with enzymatic activity (e.g., protease and polymerase). Similarly, inserting the coding sequence for APRG into the alphavirus genome in place of the capsid-coding region results in the production of a large number of APRG-coding RNAs and the synthesis of high levels of APRG in vector transduced cells. While alphavirus infection is typically associated with cell lysis within a few days, the ability to establish a persistent infection in hamster normal kidney cells (BHK-21) with a variant of Sindbis virus (SIN) indicates that the lytic replication of alphaviruses can be altered to suit the needs of the gene therapy application (Dryga, S.A. et al. (1997) Virology 228:74-83). The wide host range of alphaviruses will allow the introduction of APRG into a variety of cell types. The specific transduction of a subset of cells in a population may require the sorting of cells prior to transduction. The methods of manipulating infectious cDNA clones of alphaviruses, performing alphavirus cDNA and RNA transfections, and performing alphavirus infections, are well known to those with ordinary skill in the art.

Oligonucleotides derived from the transcription initiation site, e.g., between about positions -10 and +10 from the start site, may also be employed to inhibit gene expression. Similarly, inhibition can be achieved using triple helix base-pairing methodology. Triple helix pairing is useful because it causes

inhibition of the ability of the double helix to open sufficiently for the binding of polymerases, transcription factors, or regulatory molecules. Recent therapeutic advances using triplex DNA have been described in the literature. (See, e.g., Gee, J.E. et al. (1994) in Huber, B.E. and B.I. Carr, Molecular and Immunologic Approaches, Futura Publishing, Mt. Kisco NY, pp. 163-177.) A

5 complementary sequence or antisense molecule may also be designed to block translation of mRNA by preventing the transcript from binding to ribosomes.

Ribozymes, enzymatic RNA molecules, may also be used to catalyze the specific cleavage of RNA. The mechanism of ribozyme action involves sequence-specific hybridization of the ribozyme molecule to complementary target RNA, followed by endonucleolytic cleavage. For example,
10 engineered hammerhead motif ribozyme molecules may specifically and efficiently catalyze endonucleolytic cleavage of sequences encoding APRG.

Specific ribozyme cleavage sites within any potential RNA target are initially identified by scanning the target molecule for ribozyme cleavage sites, including the following sequences: GUA, GUU, and GUC. Once identified, short RNA sequences of between 15 and 20 ribonucleotides,
15 corresponding to the region of the target gene containing the cleavage site, may be evaluated for secondary structural features which may render the oligonucleotide inoperable. The suitability of candidate targets may also be evaluated by testing accessibility to hybridization with complementary oligonucleotides using ribonuclease protection assays.

Complementary ribonucleic acid molecules and ribozymes of the invention may be prepared by
20 any method known in the art for the synthesis of nucleic acid molecules. These include techniques for chemically synthesizing oligonucleotides such as solid phase phosphoramidite chemical synthesis. Alternatively, RNA molecules may be generated by in vitro and in vivo transcription of DNA sequences encoding APRG. Such DNA sequences may be incorporated into a wide variety of vectors with suitable RNA polymerase promoters such as T7 or SP6. Alternatively, these cDNA constructs that
25 synthesize complementary RNA, constitutively or inducibly, can be introduced into cell lines, cells, or tissues.

RNA molecules may be modified to increase intracellular stability and half-life. Possible modifications include, but are not limited to, the addition of flanking sequences at the 5' and/or 3' ends of the molecule, or the use of phosphorothioate or 2' O-methyl rather than phosphodiesterase linkages
30 within the backbone of the molecule. This concept is inherent in the production of PNAs and can be extended in all of these molecules by the inclusion of nontraditional bases such as inosine, queosine, and wybutosine, as well as acetyl-, methyl-, thio-, and similarly modified forms of adenine, cytidine, guanine, thymine, and uridine which are not as easily recognized by endogenous endonucleases.

An additional embodiment of the invention encompasses a method for screening for a

compound which is effective in altering expression of a polynucleotide encoding APRG. Compounds which may be effective in altering expression of a specific polynucleotide may include, but are not limited to, oligonucleotides, antisense oligonucleotides, triple helix-forming oligonucleotides, transcription factors and other polypeptide transcriptional regulators, and non-macromolecular chemical entities which are capable of interacting with specific polynucleotide sequences. Effective compounds may alter polynucleotide expression by acting as either inhibitors or promoters of polynucleotide expression. Thus, in the treatment of disorders associated with increased APRG expression or activity, a compound which specifically inhibits expression of the polynucleotide encoding APRG may be therapeutically useful, and in the treatment of disorders associated with decreased APRG expression or activity, a compound which specifically promotes expression of the polynucleotide encoding APRG may be therapeutically useful.

At least one, and up to a plurality, of test compounds may be screened for effectiveness in altering expression of a specific polynucleotide. A test compound may be obtained by any method commonly known in the art, including chemical modification of a compound known to be effective in altering polynucleotide expression; selection from an existing, commercially-available or proprietary library of naturally-occurring or non-natural chemical compounds; rational design of a compound based on chemical and/or structural properties of the target polynucleotide; and selection from a library of chemical compounds created combinatorially or randomly. A sample comprising a polynucleotide encoding APRG is exposed to at least one test compound thus obtained. The sample may comprise, for example, an intact or permeabilized cell, or an *in vitro* cell-free or reconstituted biochemical system. Alterations in the expression of a polynucleotide encoding APRG are assayed by any method commonly known in the art. Typically, the expression of a specific nucleotide is detected by hybridization with a probe having a nucleotide sequence complementary to the sequence of the polynucleotide encoding APRG. The amount of hybridization may be quantified, thus forming the basis for a comparison of the expression of the polynucleotide both with and without exposure to one or more test compounds. Detection of a change in the expression of a polynucleotide exposed to a test compound indicates that the test compound is effective in altering the expression of the polynucleotide. A screen for a compound effective in altering expression of a specific polynucleotide can be carried out, for example, using a *Schizosaccharomyces pombe* gene expression system (Atkins, D. et al. (1999) U.S. Patent No. 5,932,435; Arndt, G.M. et al. (2000) Nucleic Acids Res. 28:E15) or a human cell line such as HeLa cell (Clarke, M.L. et al. (2000) Biochem. Biophys. Res. Commun. 268:8-13). A particular embodiment of the present invention involves screening a combinatorial library of oligonucleotides (such as deoxyribonucleotides, ribonucleotides, peptide nucleic acids, and modified oligonucleotides) for antisense activity against a specific polynucleotide sequence (Bruce, T.W. et al. (1997) U.S. Patent No. 5,686,242; Bruce, T.W. et al. (2000) U.S.

Patent No. 6,022,691).

Many methods for introducing vectors into cells or tissues are available and equally suitable for use in vivo, in vitro, and ex vivo. For ex vivo therapy, vectors may be introduced into stem cells taken from the patient and clonally propagated for autologous transplant back into that same patient.

- 5 Delivery by transfection, by liposome injections, or by polycationic amino polymers may be achieved using methods which are well known in the art. (See, e.g., Goldman, C.K. et al. (1997) Nat. Biotechnol. 15:462-466.)

- Any of the therapeutic methods described above may be applied to any subject in need of such therapy, including, for example, mammals such as humans, dogs, cats, cows, horses, rabbits, and
10 monkeys.

- An additional embodiment of the invention relates to the administration of a composition which generally comprises an active ingredient formulated with a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient. Excipients may include, for example, sugars, starches, celluloses, gums, and proteins. Various formulations are commonly known and are thoroughly discussed in the latest edition of Remington's
15 Pharmaceutical Sciences (Maack Publishing, Easton PA). Such compositions may consist of APRG, antibodies to APRG, and mimetics, agonists, antagonists, or inhibitors of APRG.

- The compositions utilized in this invention may be administered by any number of routes including, but not limited to, oral, intravenous, intramuscular, intra-arterial, intramedullary, intrathecal, intraventricular, pulmonary, transdermal, subcutaneous, intraperitoneal, intranasal, enteral, topical,
20 sublingual, or rectal means.

- Compositions for pulmonary administration may be prepared in liquid or dry powder form. These compositions are generally aerosolized immediately prior to inhalation by the patient. In the case of small molecules (e.g. traditional low molecular weight organic drugs), aerosol delivery of fast-acting formulations is well-known in the art. In the case of macromolecules (e.g. larger peptides and proteins),
25 recent developments in the field of pulmonary delivery via the alveolar region of the lung have enabled the practical delivery of drugs such as insulin to blood circulation (see, e.g., Patton, J.S. et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,997,848). Pulmonary delivery has the advantage of administration without needle injection, and obviates the need for potentially toxic penetration enhancers.

- Compositions suitable for use in the invention include compositions wherein the active
30 ingredients are contained in an effective amount to achieve the intended purpose. The determination of an effective dose is well within the capability of those skilled in the art.

Specialized forms of compositions may be prepared for direct intracellular delivery of macromolecules comprising APRG or fragments thereof. For example, liposome preparations containing a cell-impermeable macromolecule may promote cell fusion and intracellular delivery of the

macromolecule. Alternatively, APRG or a fragment thereof may be joined to a short cationic N-terminal portion from the HIV Tat-1 protein. Fusion proteins thus generated have been found to transduce into the cells of all tissues, including the brain, in a mouse model system (Schwarze, S.R. et al. (1999) Science 285:1569-1572).

5 For any compound, the therapeutically effective dose can be estimated initially either in cell culture assays, e.g., of neoplastic cells, or in animal models such as mice, rats, rabbits, dogs, monkeys, or pigs. An animal model may also be used to determine the appropriate concentration range and route of administration. Such information can then be used to determine useful doses and routes for administration in humans.

10 A therapeutically effective dose refers to that amount of active ingredient, for example APRG or fragments thereof, antibodies of APRG, and agonists, antagonists or inhibitors of APRG, which ameliorates the symptoms or condition. Therapeutic efficacy and toxicity may be determined by standard pharmaceutical procedures in cell cultures or with experimental animals, such as by calculating the ED₅₀ (the dose therapeutically effective in 50% of the population) or LD₅₀ (the dose
15 lethal to 50% of the population) statistics. The dose ratio of toxic to therapeutic effects is the therapeutic index, which can be expressed as the LD₅₀/ED₅₀ ratio. Compositions which exhibit large therapeutic indices are preferred. The data obtained from cell culture assays and animal studies are used to formulate a range of dosage for human use. The dosage contained in such compositions is preferably within a range of circulating concentrations that includes the ED₅₀ with little or no toxicity.
20 The dosage varies within this range depending upon the dosage form employed, the sensitivity of the patient, and the route of administration.

The exact dosage will be determined by the practitioner, in light of factors related to the subject requiring treatment. Dosage and administration are adjusted to provide sufficient levels of the active moiety or to maintain the desired effect. Factors which may be taken into account include the severity
25 of the disease state, the general health of the subject, the age, weight, and gender of the subject, time and frequency of administration, drug combination(s), reaction sensitivities, and response to therapy. Long-acting compositions may be administered every 3 to 4 days, every week, or biweekly depending on the half-life and clearance rate of the particular formulation.

Normal dosage amounts may vary from about 0.1 μ g to 100,000 μ g, up to a total dose of
30 about 1 gram, depending upon the route of administration. Guidance as to particular dosages and methods of delivery is provided in the literature and generally available to practitioners in the art. Those skilled in the art will employ different formulations for nucleotides than for proteins or their inhibitors. Similarly, delivery of polynucleotides or polypeptides will be specific to particular cells, conditions, locations, etc.

DIAGNOSTICS

In another embodiment, antibodies which specifically bind APRG may be used for the diagnosis of disorders characterized by expression of APRG, or in assays to monitor patients being treated with APRG or agonists, antagonists, or inhibitors of APRG. Antibodies useful for diagnostic purposes may be prepared in the same manner as described above for therapeutics. Diagnostic assays for APRG include methods which utilize the antibody and a label to detect APRG in human body fluids or in extracts of cells or tissues. The antibodies may be used with or without modification, and may be labeled by covalent or non-covalent attachment of a reporter molecule. A wide variety of reporter molecules, several of which are described above, are known in the art and may be used.

A variety of protocols for measuring APRG, including ELISAs, RIAs, and FACS, are known in the art and provide a basis for diagnosing altered or abnormal levels of APRG expression. Normal or standard values for APRG expression are established by combining body fluids or cell extracts taken from normal mammalian subjects, for example, human subjects, with antibodies to APRG under conditions suitable for complex formation. The amount of standard complex formation may be quantitated by various methods, such as photometric means. Quantities of APRG expressed in subject, control, and disease samples from biopsied tissues are compared with the standard values. Deviation between standard and subject values establishes the parameters for diagnosing disease.

In another embodiment of the invention, the polynucleotides encoding APRG may be used for diagnostic purposes. The polynucleotides which may be used include oligonucleotide sequences, complementary RNA and DNA molecules, and PNAs. The polynucleotides may be used to detect and quantify gene expression in biopsied tissues in which expression of APRG may be correlated with disease. The diagnostic assay may be used to determine absence, presence, and excess expression of APRG, and to monitor regulation of APRG levels during therapeutic intervention.

In one aspect, hybridization with PCR probes which are capable of detecting polynucleotide sequences, including genomic sequences, encoding APRG or closely related molecules may be used to identify nucleic acid sequences which encode APRG. The specificity of the probe, whether it is made from a highly specific region, e.g., the 5' regulatory region, or from a less specific region, e.g., a conserved motif, and the stringency of the hybridization or amplification will determine whether the probe identifies only naturally occurring sequences encoding APRG, allelic variants, or related sequences.

Probes may also be used for the detection of related sequences, and may have at least 50% sequence identity to any of the APRG encoding sequences. The hybridization probes of the subject invention may be DNA or RNA and may be derived from the sequence of SEQ ID NO:4-6 or from genomic sequences including promoters, enhancers, and introns of the APRG gene.

Means for producing specific hybridization probes for DNAs encoding APRG include the cloning of polynucleotide sequences encoding APRG or APRG derivatives into vectors for the production of mRNA probes. Such vectors are known in the art, are commercially available, and may be used to synthesize RNA probes in vitro by means of the addition of the appropriate RNA

5 polymerases and the appropriate labeled nucleotides. Hybridization probes may be labeled by a variety of reporter groups, for example, by radionuclides such as ^{32}P or ^{35}S , or by enzymatic labels, such as alkaline phosphatase coupled to the probe via avidin/biotin coupling systems, and the like.

Polynucleotide sequences encoding APRG may be used for the diagnosis of disorders associated with expression of APRG. Examples of such disorders include, but are not limited to, a

10 cell proliferative disorder such as actinic keratosis, arteriosclerosis, atherosclerosis, bursitis, cirrhosis, hepatitis, mixed connective tissue disease (MCTD), myelofibrosis, paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria, polycythemia vera, psoriasis, primary thrombocythemia, and cancers including adenocarcinoma, leukemia, lymphoma, melanoma, myeloma, sarcoma, teratocarcinoma, and, in particular, a cancer of the adrenal gland, bladder, bone, bone marrow, brain, breast, cervix, gall

15 bladder, ganglia, gastrointestinal tract, heart, kidney, liver, lung, muscle, ovary, pancreas, parathyroid, penis, prostate, salivary glands, skin, spleen, testis, thymus, thyroid, and uterus; an immunological disorder such as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), Addison's disease, adult respiratory distress syndrome, allergies, ankylosing spondylitis, amyloidosis, anemia, asthma, atherosclerosis, autoimmune hemolytic anemia, autoimmune thyroiditis, autoimmune polyendocrinopathy-

20 candidiasis-ectodermal dystrophy (APECED), bronchitis, cholecystitis, contact dermatitis, Crohn's disease, atopic dermatitis, dermatomyositis, diabetes mellitus, emphysema, episodic lymphopenia with lymphocytotoxins, erythroblastosis fetalis, erythema nodosum, atrophic gastritis, glomerulonephritis, Goodpasture's syndrome, gout, Graves' disease, Hashimoto's thyroiditis, hypereosinophilia, irritable bowel syndrome, multiple sclerosis, myasthenia gravis, myocardial or

25 pericardial inflammation, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, pancreatitis, polymyositis, psoriasis, Reiter's syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, Sjögren's syndrome, systemic anaphylaxis, systemic lupus erythematosus, systemic sclerosis, thrombocytopenic purpura, ulcerative colitis, uveitis, Werner syndrome, a complication of cancer, hemodialysis, and extracorporeal circulation, viral, bacterial, fungal, parasitic, protozoal, and helminthic infections, and trauma; and a reproductive disorder such

30 as a disorder of prolactin production, infertility, including tubal disease, ovulatory defects, and endometriosis, a disruption of the estrous cycle, a disruption of the menstrual cycle, polycystic ovary syndrome, ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome, endometrial and ovarian tumors, uterine fibroids, autoimmune disorders, ectopic pregnancies, and teratogenesis; cancer of the breast, fibrocystic breast disease, and galactorrhea; disruptions of spermatogenesis, abnormal sperm physiology, cancer of the

35 testis, cancer of the prostate, benign prostatic hyperplasia, prostatitis, Peyronie's disease, impotence,

carcinoma of the male breast, and gynecomastia. The polynucleotide sequences encoding APRG may be used in Southern or northern analysis, dot blot, or other membrane-based technologies; in PCR technologies; in dipstick, pin, and multiformat ELISA-like assays; and in microarrays utilizing fluids or tissues from patients to detect altered APRG expression. Such qualitative or quantitative methods are well known in the art.

In a particular aspect, the nucleotide sequences encoding APRG may be useful in assays that detect the presence of associated disorders, particularly those mentioned above. The nucleotide sequences encoding APRG may be labeled by standard methods and added to a fluid or tissue sample from a patient under conditions suitable for the formation of hybridization complexes. After a suitable incubation period, the sample is washed and the signal is quantified and compared with a standard value. If the amount of signal in the patient sample is significantly altered in comparison to a control sample then the presence of altered levels of nucleotide sequences encoding APRG in the sample indicates the presence of the associated disorder. Such assays may also be used to evaluate the efficacy of a particular therapeutic treatment regimen in animal studies, in clinical trials, or to monitor the treatment of an individual patient.

In order to provide a basis for the diagnosis of a disorder associated with expression of APRG, a normal or standard profile for expression is established. This may be accomplished by combining body fluids or cell extracts taken from normal subjects, either animal or human, with a sequence, or a fragment thereof, encoding APRG, under conditions suitable for hybridization or amplification. Standard hybridization may be quantified by comparing the values obtained from normal subjects with values from an experiment in which a known amount of a substantially purified polynucleotide is used. Standard values obtained in this manner may be compared with values obtained from samples from patients who are symptomatic for a disorder. Deviation from standard values is used to establish the presence of a disorder.

Once the presence of a disorder is established and a treatment protocol is initiated, hybridization assays may be repeated on a regular basis to determine if the level of expression in the patient begins to approximate that which is observed in the normal subject. The results obtained from successive assays may be used to show the efficacy of treatment over a period ranging from several days to months.

With respect to cancer, the presence of an abnormal amount of transcript (either under- or overexpressed) in biopsied tissue from an individual may indicate a predisposition for the development of the disease, or may provide a means for detecting the disease prior to the appearance of actual clinical symptoms. A more definitive diagnosis of this type may allow health professionals to employ preventative measures or aggressive treatment earlier thereby preventing the development or further

progression of the cancer.

Additional diagnostic uses for oligonucleotides designed from the sequences encoding APRG may involve the use of PCR. These oligomers may be chemically synthesized, generated enzymatically, or produced in vitro. Oligomers will preferably contain a fragment of a polynucleotide encoding APRG, or a fragment of a polynucleotide complementary to the polynucleotide encoding APRG, and will be employed under optimized conditions for identification of a specific gene or condition. Oligomers may also be employed under less stringent conditions for detection or quantification of closely related DNA or RNA sequences.

In a particular aspect, oligonucleotide primers derived from the polynucleotide sequences encoding APRG may be used to detect single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs). SNPs are substitutions, insertions and deletions that are a frequent cause of inherited or acquired genetic disease in humans. Methods of SNP detection include, but are not limited to, single-stranded conformation polymorphism (SSCP) and fluorescent SSCP (fSSCP) methods. In SSCP, oligonucleotide primers derived from the polynucleotide sequences encoding APRG are used to amplify DNA using the polymerase chain reaction (PCR). The DNA may be derived, for example, from diseased or normal tissue, biopsy samples, bodily fluids, and the like. SNPs in the DNA cause differences in the secondary and tertiary structures of PCR products in single-stranded form, and these differences are detectable using gel electrophoresis in non-denaturing gels. In fSSCP, the oligonucleotide primers are fluorescently labeled, which allows detection of the amplimers in high-throughput equipment such as DNA sequencing machines. Additionally, sequence database analysis methods, termed *in silico* SNP (isSNP), are capable of identifying polymorphisms by comparing the sequence of individual overlapping DNA fragments which assemble into a common consensus sequence. These computer-based methods filter out sequence variations due to laboratory preparation of DNA and sequencing errors using statistical models and automated analyses of DNA sequence chromatograms. In the alternative, SNPs may be detected and characterized by mass spectrometry using, for example, the high throughput MASSARRAY system (Sequenom, Inc., San Diego CA).

Methods which may also be used to quantify the expression of APRG include radiolabeling or biotinylating nucleotides, coamplification of a control nucleic acid, and interpolating results from standard curves. (See, e.g., Melby, P.C. et al. (1993) *J. Immunol. Methods* 159:235-244; Duplaa, C. et al. (1993) *Anal. Biochem.* 212:229-236.) The speed of quantitation of multiple samples may be accelerated by running the assay in a high-throughput format where the oligomer or polynucleotide of interest is presented in various dilutions and a spectrophotometric or colorimetric response gives rapid quantitation.

In further embodiments, oligonucleotides or longer fragments derived from any of the

polynucleotide sequences described herein may be used as elements on a microarray. The microarray can be used in transcript imaging techniques which monitor the relative expression levels of large numbers of genes simultaneously as described below. The microarray may also be used to identify genetic variants, mutations, and polymorphisms. This information may be used to determine gene function, to understand the genetic basis of a disorder, to diagnose a disorder, to monitor progression/regression of disease as a function of gene expression, and to develop and monitor the activities of therapeutic agents in the treatment of disease. In particular, this information may be used to develop a pharmacogenomic profile of a patient in order to select the most appropriate and effective treatment regimen for that patient. For example, therapeutic agents which are highly effective and display the fewest side effects may be selected for a patient based on his/her pharmacogenomic profile.

In another embodiment, APRG, fragments of APRG, or antibodies specific for APRG may be used as elements on a microarray. The microarray may be used to monitor or measure protein-protein interactions, drug-target interactions, and gene expression profiles, as described above.

A particular embodiment relates to the use of the polynucleotides of the present invention to generate a transcript image of a tissue or cell type. A transcript image represents the global pattern of gene expression by a particular tissue or cell type. Global gene expression patterns are analyzed by quantifying the number of expressed genes and their relative abundance under given conditions and at a given time. (See Seilhamer et al., "Comparative Gene Transcript Analysis," U.S. Patent Number 5,840,484, expressly incorporated by reference herein.) Thus a transcript image may be generated by hybridizing the polynucleotides of the present invention or their complements to the totality of transcripts or reverse transcripts of a particular tissue or cell type. In one embodiment, the hybridization takes place in high-throughput format, wherein the polynucleotides of the present invention or their complements comprise a subset of a plurality of elements on a microarray. The resultant transcript image would provide a profile of gene activity.

Transcript images may be generated using transcripts isolated from tissues, cell lines, biopsies, or other biological samples. The transcript image may thus reflect gene expression in vivo, as in the case of a tissue or biopsy sample, or in vitro, as in the case of a cell line.

Transcript images which profile the expression of the polynucleotides of the present invention may also be used in conjunction with in vitro model systems and preclinical evaluation of pharmaceuticals, as well as toxicological testing of industrial and naturally-occurring environmental compounds. All compounds induce characteristic gene expression patterns, frequently termed molecular fingerprints or toxicant signatures, which are indicative of mechanisms of action and toxicity (Nuwaysir, E.F. et al. (1999) Mol. Carcinog. 24:153-159; Steiner, S. and N.L. Anderson (2000) Toxicol. Lett. 112-113:467-471, expressly incorporated by reference herein). If a test compound has a

signature similar to that of a compound with known toxicity, it is likely to share those toxic properties. These fingerprints or signatures are most useful and refined when they contain expression information from a large number of genes and gene families. Ideally, a genome-wide measurement of expression provides the highest quality signature. Even genes whose expression is not altered by any tested
5 compounds are important as well, as the levels of expression of these genes are used to normalize the rest of the expression data. The normalization procedure is useful for comparison of expression data after treatment with different compounds. While the assignment of gene function to elements of a toxicant signature aids in interpretation of toxicity mechanisms, knowledge of gene function is not necessary for the statistical matching of signatures which leads to prediction of toxicity. (See, for
10 example, Press Release 00-02 from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, released February 29, 2000, available at <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/oc/news/toxchip.htm>.) Therefore, it is important and desirable in toxicological screening using toxicant signatures to include all expressed gene sequences.

In one embodiment, the toxicity of a test compound is assessed by treating a biological sample
15 containing nucleic acids with the test compound. Nucleic acids that are expressed in the treated biological sample are hybridized with one or more probes specific to the polynucleotides of the present invention, so that transcript levels corresponding to the polynucleotides of the present invention may be quantified. The transcript levels in the treated biological sample are compared with levels in an untreated biological sample. Differences in the transcript levels between the two samples
20 are indicative of a toxic response caused by the test compound in the treated sample.

Another particular embodiment relates to the use of the polypeptide sequences of the present invention to analyze the proteome of a tissue or cell type. The term proteome refers to the global pattern of protein expression in a particular tissue or cell type. Each protein component of a proteome can be subjected individually to further analysis. Proteome expression patterns, or profiles, are
25 analyzed by quantifying the number of expressed proteins and their relative abundance under given conditions and at a given time. A profile of a cell's proteome may thus be generated by separating and analyzing the polypeptides of a particular tissue or cell type. In one embodiment, the separation is achieved using two-dimensional gel electrophoresis, in which proteins from a sample are separated by isoelectric focusing in the first dimension, and then according to molecular weight by sodium dodecyl
30 sulfate slab gel electrophoresis in the second dimension (Steiner and Anderson, *supra*). The proteins are visualized in the gel as discrete and uniquely positioned spots, typically by staining the gel with an agent such as Coomassie Blue or silver or fluorescent stains. The optical density of each protein spot is generally proportional to the level of the protein in the sample. The optical densities of equivalently positioned protein spots from different samples, for example, from biological samples either treated or

untreated with a test compound or therapeutic agent, are compared to identify any changes in protein spot density related to the treatment. The proteins in the spots are partially sequenced using, for example, standard methods employing chemical or enzymatic cleavage followed by mass spectrometry. The identity of the protein in a spot may be determined by comparing its partial sequence, preferably of
5 at least 5 contiguous amino acid residues, to the polypeptide sequences of the present invention. In some cases, further sequence data may be obtained for definitive protein identification.

A proteomic profile may also be generated using antibodies specific for APRG to quantify the levels of APRG expression. In one embodiment, the antibodies are used as elements on a microarray, and protein expression levels are quantified by exposing the microarray to the sample and detecting the
10 levels of protein bound to each array element (Lueking, A. et al. (1999) *Anal. Biochem.* 270:103-111; Mendozze, L.G. et al. (1999) *Biotechniques* 27:778-788). Detection may be performed by a variety of methods known in the art, for example, by reacting the proteins in the sample with a thiol- or amino-reactive fluorescent compound and detecting the amount of fluorescence bound at each array element.

Toxicant signatures at the proteome level are also useful for toxicological screening, and should
15 be analyzed in parallel with toxicant signatures at the transcript level. There is a poor correlation between transcript and protein abundances for some proteins in some tissues (Anderson, N.L. and J. Seilhamer (1997) *Electrophoresis* 18:533-537), so proteome toxicant signatures may be useful in the analysis of compounds which do not significantly affect the transcript image, but which alter the proteomic profile. In addition, the analysis of transcripts in body fluids is difficult, due to rapid
20 degradation of mRNA, so proteomic profiling may be more reliable and informative in such cases.

In another embodiment, the toxicity of a test compound is assessed by treating a biological sample containing proteins with the test compound. Proteins that are expressed in the treated biological sample are separated so that the amount of each protein can be quantified. The amount of each protein is compared to the amount of the corresponding protein in an untreated biological sample. A difference
25 in the amount of protein between the two samples is indicative of a toxic response to the test compound in the treated sample. Individual proteins are identified by sequencing the amino acid residues of the individual proteins and comparing these partial sequences to the polypeptides of the present invention.

In another embodiment, the toxicity of a test compound is assessed by treating a biological sample containing proteins with the test compound. Proteins from the biological sample are incubated
30 with antibodies specific to the polypeptides of the present invention. The amount of protein recognized by the antibodies is quantified. The amount of protein in the treated biological sample is compared with the amount in an untreated biological sample. A difference in the amount of protein between the two samples is indicative of a toxic response to the test compound in the treated sample.

Microarrays may be prepared, used, and analyzed using methods known in the art. (See, e.g.,

Brennan, T.M. et al. (1995) U.S. Patent No. 5,474,796; Schena, M. et al. (1996) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 93:10614-10619; Baldeschweiler et al. (1995) PCT application WO95/251116; Shalon, D. et al. (1995) PCT application WO95/35505; Heller, R.A. et al. (1997) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 94:2150-2155; and Heller, M.J. et al. (1997) U.S. Patent No. 5,605,662.) Various types of microarrays are well known and thoroughly described in DNA Microarrays: A Practical Approach, M. Schena, ed. (1999) Oxford University Press, London, hereby expressly incorporated by reference.

In another embodiment of the invention, nucleic acid sequences encoding APRG may be used to generate hybridization probes useful in mapping the naturally occurring genomic sequence. Either coding or noncoding sequences may be used, and in some instances, noncoding sequences may be preferable over coding sequences. For example, conservation of a coding sequence among members of a multi-gene family may potentially cause undesired cross hybridization during chromosomal mapping. The sequences may be mapped to a particular chromosome, to a specific region of a chromosome, or to artificial chromosome constructions, e.g., human artificial chromosomes (HACs), yeast artificial chromosomes (YACs), bacterial artificial chromosomes (BACs), bacterial P1 constructions, or single chromosome cDNA libraries. (See, e.g., Harrington, J.J. et al. (1997) Nat. Genet. 15:345-355; Price, C.M. (1993) Blood Rev. 7:127-134; and Trask, B.J. (1991) Trends Genet. 7:149-154.) Once mapped, the nucleic acid sequences of the invention may be used to develop genetic linkage maps, for example, which correlate the inheritance of a disease state with the inheritance of a particular chromosome region or restriction fragment length polymorphism (RFLP). (See, for example, Lander, E.S. and D. Botstein (1986) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 83:7353-7357.)

Fluorescent in situ hybridization (FISH) may be correlated with other physical and genetic map data. (See, e.g., Heinz-Ulrich, et al. (1995) in Meyers, supra, pp. 965-968.) Examples of genetic map data can be found in various scientific journals or at the Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man (OMIM) World Wide Web site. Correlation between the location of the gene encoding APRG on a physical map and a specific disorder, or a predisposition to a specific disorder, may help define the region of DNA associated with that disorder and thus may further positional cloning efforts.

In situ hybridization of chromosomal preparations and physical mapping techniques, such as linkage analysis using established chromosomal markers, may be used for extending genetic maps. Often the placement of a gene on the chromosome of another mammalian species, such as mouse, may reveal associated markers even if the exact chromosomal locus is not known. This information is valuable to investigators searching for disease genes using positional cloning or other gene discovery techniques. Once the gene or genes responsible for a disease or syndrome have been crudely localized by genetic linkage to a particular genomic region, e.g., ataxia-telangiectasia to 11q22-23, any sequences mapping to that area may represent associated or regulatory genes for further investigation. (See, e.g.,

Gatti, R.A. et al. (1988) Nature 336:577-580.) The nucleotide sequence of the instant invention may also be used to detect differences in the chromosomal location due to translocation, inversion, etc., among normal, carrier, or affected individuals.

5 In another embodiment of the invention, APRG, its catalytic or immunogenic fragments, or oligopeptides thereof can be used for screening libraries of compounds in any of a variety of drug screening techniques. The fragment employed in such screening may be free in solution, affixed to a solid support, borne on a cell surface, or located intracellularly. The formation of binding complexes between APRG and the agent being tested may be measured.

10 Another technique for drug screening provides for high throughput screening of compounds having suitable binding affinity to the protein of interest. (See, e.g., Geysen, et al. (1984) PCT application WO84/03564.) In this method, large numbers of different small test compounds are synthesized on a solid substrate. The test compounds are reacted with APRG, or fragments thereof, and washed. Bound APRG is then detected by methods well known in the art. Purified APRG can also be coated directly onto plates for use in the aforementioned drug screening techniques. Alternatively,
15 non-neutralizing antibodies can be used to capture the peptide and immobilize it on a solid support.

In another embodiment, one may use competitive drug screening assays in which neutralizing antibodies capable of binding APRG specifically compete with a test compound for binding APRG. In this manner, antibodies can be used to detect the presence of any peptide which shares one or more antigenic determinants with APRG.

20 In additional embodiments, the nucleotide sequences which encode APRG may be used in any molecular biology techniques that have yet to be developed, provided the new techniques rely on properties of nucleotide sequences that are currently known, including, but not limited to, such properties as the triplet genetic code and specific base pair interactions.

25 Without further elaboration, it is believed that one skilled in the art can, using the preceding description, utilize the present invention to its fullest extent. The following preferred specific embodiments are, therefore, to be construed as merely illustrative, and not limitative of the remainder of the disclosure in any way whatsoever.

The disclosures of all patents, applications, and publications mentioned above and below, in particular U.S. Ser. No. 60/250,326, and U.S. Ser. No. 60/209,407, are hereby expressly incorporated
30 by reference.

EXAMPLES

I. Construction of cDNA Libraries

Incyte cDNAs were derived from cDNA libraries described in the LIFESEQ GOLD database

(Incyte Genomics, Palo Alto CA) and shown in Table 4, column 5. Some tissues were homogenized and lysed in guanidinium isothiocyanate, while others were homogenized and lysed in phenol or in a suitable mixture of denaturants, such as TRIZOL (Life Technologies), a monophasic solution of phenol and guanidine isothiocyanate. The resulting lysates were centrifuged over CsCl cushions or extracted with chloroform. RNA was precipitated from the lysates with either isopropanol or sodium acetate and ethanol, or by other routine methods.

Phenol extraction and precipitation of RNA were repeated as necessary to increase RNA purity. In some cases, RNA was treated with DNase. For most libraries, poly(A)+ RNA was isolated using oligo d(T)-coupled paramagnetic particles (Promega), OLIGOTEX latex particles (QIAGEN, Chatsworth CA), or an OLIGOTEX mRNA purification kit (QIAGEN). Alternatively, RNA was isolated directly from tissue lysates using other RNA isolation kits, e.g., the POLY(A)PURE mRNA purification kit (Ambion, Austin TX).

In some cases, Stratagene was provided with RNA and constructed the corresponding cDNA libraries. Otherwise, cDNA was synthesized and cDNA libraries were constructed with the UNIZAP vector system (Stratagene) or SUPERScript plasmid system (Life Technologies), using the recommended procedures or similar methods known in the art. (See, e.g., Ausubel, 1997, *supra*, units 5.1-6.6.) Reverse transcription was initiated using oligo d(T) or random primers. Synthetic oligonucleotide adapters were ligated to double stranded cDNA, and the cDNA was digested with the appropriate restriction enzyme or enzymes. For most libraries, the cDNA was size-selected (300-1000 bp) using SEPHACRYL S1000, SEPHAROSE CL2B, or SEPHAROSE CL4B column chromatography (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech) or preparative agarose gel electrophoresis. cDNAs were ligated into compatible restriction enzyme sites of the polylinker of a suitable plasmid; e.g., PBLUESCRIPT plasmid (Stratagene), PSPORT1 plasmid (Life Technologies), PCDNA2.1 plasmid (Invitrogen, Carlsbad CA), PBK-CMV plasmid (Stratagene), or pINCY (Incyte Genomics, Palo Alto CA), or derivatives thereof. Recombinant plasmids were transformed into competent *E. coli* cells including XL1-Blue, XL1-BlueMRF, or SOLR from Stratagene or DH5 α , DH10B, or ElectroMAX DH10B from Life Technologies.

II. Isolation of cDNA Clones

Plasmids obtained as described in Example I were recovered from host cells by *in vivo* excision using the UNIZAP vector system (Stratagene) or by cell lysis. Plasmids were purified using at least one of the following: a Magic or WIZARD Minipreps DNA purification system (Promega); an AGTC Miniprep purification kit (Edge Biosystems, Gaithersburg MD); and QIAWELL 8 Plasmid, QIAWELL 8 Plus Plasmid, QIAWELL 8 Ultra Plasmid purification systems or the R.E.A.L. PREP 96 plasmid purification kit from QIAGEN. Following precipitation, plasmids were resuspended in 0.1 ml of

distilled water and stored, with or without lyophilization, at 4°C.

Alternatively, plasmid DNA was amplified from host cell lysates using direct link PCR in a high-throughput format (Rao, V.B. (1994) Anal. Biochem. 216:1-14). Host cell lysis and thermal cycling steps were carried out in a single reaction mixture. Samples were processed and stored in 384-well plates, and the concentration of amplified plasmid DNA was quantified fluorometrically using PICOGREEN dye (Molecular Probes, Eugene OR) and a FLUOROSKAN II fluorescence scanner (Labsystems Oy, Helsinki, Finland).

III. Sequencing and Analysis

Incyte cDNA recovered in plasmids as described in Example II were sequenced as follows. Sequencing reactions were processed using standard methods or high-throughput instrumentation such as the ABI CATALYST 800 (Applied Biosystems) thermal cycler or the PTC-200 thermal cycler (MJ Research) in conjunction with the HYDRA microdispenser (Robbins Scientific) or the MICROLAB 2200 (Hamilton) liquid transfer system. cDNA sequencing reactions were prepared using reagents provided by Amersham Pharmacia Biotech or supplied in ABI sequencing kits such as the ABI PRISM BIGDYE Terminator cycle sequencing ready reaction kit (Applied Biosystems). Electrophoretic separation of cDNA sequencing reactions and detection of labeled polynucleotides were carried out using the MEGABACE 1000 DNA sequencing system (Molecular Dynamics); the ABI PRISM 373 or 377 sequencing system (Applied Biosystems) in conjunction with standard ABI protocols and base calling software; or other sequence analysis systems known in the art. Reading frames within the cDNA sequences were identified using standard methods (reviewed in Ausubel, 1997, *supra*, unit 7.7). Some of the cDNA sequences were selected for extension using the techniques disclosed in Example VIII.

The polynucleotide sequences derived from Incyte cDNAs were validated by removing vector, linker, and poly(A) sequences and by masking ambiguous bases, using algorithms and programs based on BLAST, dynamic programming, and dinucleotide nearest neighbor analysis. The Incyte cDNA sequences or translations thereof were then queried against a selection of public databases such as the GenBank primate, rodent, mammalian, vertebrate, and eukaryote databases, and BLOCKS, PRINTS, DOMO, PRODOM, and hidden Markov model (HMM)-based protein family databases such as PFAM. (HMM is a probabilistic approach which analyzes consensus primary structures of gene families. See, for example, Eddy, S.R. (1996) Curr. Opin. Struct. Biol. 6:361-365.) The queries were performed using programs based on BLAST, FASTA, BLIMPS, and HMMER. The Incyte cDNA sequences were assembled to produce full length polynucleotide sequences. Alternatively, GenBank cDNAs, GenBank ESTs, stitched sequences, stretched sequences, or Genscan-predicted coding sequences (see Examples IV and V) were used to extend Incyte cDNA assemblages to full length.

Assembly was performed using programs based on Phred, Phrap, and Consed, and cDNA assemblages were screened for open reading frames using programs based on GeneMark, BLAST, and FASTA. The full length polynucleotide sequences were translated to derive the corresponding full length polypeptide sequences. Alternatively, a polypeptide of the invention may begin at any of the methionine residues of the full length translated polypeptide. Full length polypeptide sequences were subsequently analyzed by querying against databases such as the GenBank protein databases (genpept), SwissProt, BLOCKS, PRINTS, DOMO, PRODOM, Prosite, and hidden Markov model (HMM)-based protein family databases such as PFAM. Full length polynucleotide sequences are also analyzed using MACDNASIS PRO software (Hitachi Software Engineering, South San Francisco CA) and LASERGENE software (DNASTAR). Polynucleotide and polypeptide sequence alignments are generated using default parameters specified by the CLUSTAL algorithm as incorporated into the MEGALIGN multisequence alignment program (DNASTAR), which also calculates the percent identity between aligned sequences.

Table 7 summarizes the tools, programs, and algorithms used for the analysis and assembly of Incyte cDNA and full length sequences and provides applicable descriptions, references, and threshold parameters. The first column of Table 7 shows the tools, programs, and algorithms used, the second column provides brief descriptions thereof, the third column presents appropriate references, all of which are incorporated by reference herein in their entirety, and the fourth column presents, where applicable, the scores, probability values, and other parameters used to evaluate the strength of a match between two sequences (the higher the score or the lower the probability value, the greater the identity between two sequences).

The programs described above for the assembly and analysis of full length polynucleotide and polypeptide sequences were also used to identify polynucleotide sequence fragments from SEQ ID NO:4-6. Fragments from about 20 to about 4000 nucleotides which are useful in hybridization and amplification technologies are described in Table 4, column 4.

IV. Identification and Editing of Coding Sequences from Genomic DNA

Putative apoptosis regulators were initially identified by running the Genscan gene identification program against public genomic sequence databases (e.g., gbpri and gbhtg). Genscan is a general-purpose gene identification program which analyzes genomic DNA sequences from a variety of organisms (See Burge, C. and S. Karlin (1997) J. Mol. Biol. 268:78-94, and Burge, C. and S. Karlin (1998) Curr. Opin. Struct. Biol. 8:346-354). The program concatenates predicted exons to form an assembled cDNA sequence extending from a methionine to a stop codon. The output of Genscan is a FASTA database of polynucleotide and polypeptide sequences. The maximum range of sequence for Genscan to analyze at once was set to 30 kb. To determine which of these Genscan predicted cDNA

sequences encode apoptosis regulators, the encoded polypeptides were analyzed by querying against PFAM models for apoptosis regulators. Potential apoptosis regulators were also identified by homology to Incyte cDNA sequences that had been annotated as apoptosis regulators. These selected Genscan-predicted sequences were then compared by BLAST analysis to the genpept and gbpr public databases. Where necessary, the Genscan-predicted sequences were then edited by comparison to the top BLAST hit from genpept to correct errors in the sequence predicted by Genscan, such as extra or omitted exons. BLAST analysis was also used to find any Incyte cDNA or public cDNA coverage of the Genscan-predicted sequences, thus providing evidence for transcription. When Incyte cDNA coverage was available, this information was used to correct or confirm the Genscan predicted sequence. Full length polynucleotide sequences were obtained by assembling Genscan-predicted coding sequences with Incyte cDNA sequences and/or public cDNA sequences using the assembly process described in Example III. Alternatively, full length polynucleotide sequences were derived entirely from edited or unedited Genscan-predicted coding sequences.

V. Assembly of Genomic Sequence Data with cDNA Sequence Data

"Stitched" Sequences

Partial cDNA sequences were extended with exons predicted by the Genscan gene identification program described in Example IV. Partial cDNAs assembled as described in Example III were mapped to genomic DNA and parsed into clusters containing related cDNAs and Genscan exon predictions from one or more genomic sequences. Each cluster was analyzed using an algorithm based on graph theory and dynamic programming to integrate cDNA and genomic information, generating possible splice variants that were subsequently confirmed, edited, or extended to create a full length sequence. Sequence intervals in which the entire length of the interval was present on more than one sequence in the cluster were identified, and intervals thus identified were considered to be equivalent by transitivity. For example, if an interval was present on a cDNA and two genomic sequences, then all three intervals were considered to be equivalent. This process allows unrelated but consecutive genomic sequences to be brought together, bridged by cDNA sequence. Intervals thus identified were then "stitched" together by the stitching algorithm in the order that they appear along their parent sequences to generate the longest possible sequence, as well as sequence variants. Linkages between intervals which proceed along one type of parent sequence (cDNA to cDNA or genomic sequence to genomic sequence) were given preference over linkages which change parent type (cDNA to genomic sequence). The resultant stitched sequences were translated and compared by BLAST analysis to the genpept and gbpr public databases. Incorrect exons predicted by Genscan were corrected by comparison to the top BLAST hit from genpept. Sequences were further extended with additional cDNA sequences, or by inspection of genomic DNA, when necessary.

“Stretched” Sequences

Partial DNA sequences were extended to full length with an algorithm based on BLAST analysis. First, partial cDNAs assembled as described in Example III were queried against public databases such as the GenBank primate, rodent, mammalian, vertebrate, and eukaryote databases using the BLAST program. The nearest GenBank protein homolog was then compared by BLAST analysis to either Incyte cDNA sequences or GenScan exon predicted sequences described in Example IV. A chimeric protein was generated by using the resultant high-scoring segment pairs (HSPs) to map the translated sequences onto the GenBank protein homolog. Insertions or deletions may occur in the chimeric protein with respect to the original GenBank protein homolog. The GenBank protein homolog, the chimeric protein, or both were used as probes to search for homologous genomic sequences from the public human genome databases. Partial DNA sequences were therefore “stretched” or extended by the addition of homologous genomic sequences. The resultant stretched sequences were examined to determine whether it contained a complete gene.

VI. Chromosomal Mapping of APRG Encoding Polynucleotides

The sequences which were used to assemble SEQ ID NO:4-6 were compared with sequences from the Incyte LIFESEQ database and public domain databases using BLAST and other implementations of the Smith-Waterman algorithm. Sequences from these databases that matched SEQ ID NO:4-6 were assembled into clusters of contiguous and overlapping sequences using assembly algorithms such as Phrap (Table 7). Radiation hybrid and genetic mapping data available from public resources such as the Stanford Human Genome Center (SHGC), Whitehead Institute for Genome Research (WIGR), and Généthon were used to determine if any of the clustered sequences had been previously mapped. Inclusion of a mapped sequence in a cluster resulted in the assignment of all sequences of that cluster, including its particular SEQ ID NO., to that map location.

Map locations are represented by ranges, or intervals, of human chromosomes. The map position of an interval, in centiMorgans, is measured relative to the terminus of the chromosome's p-arm. (The centiMorgan (cM) is a unit of measurement based on recombination frequencies between chromosomal markers. On average, 1 cM is roughly equivalent to 1 megabase (Mb) of DNA in humans, although this can vary widely due to hot and cold spots of recombination.) The cM distances are based on genetic markers mapped by Généthon which provide boundaries for radiation hybrid markers whose sequences were included in each of the clusters. Human genome maps and other resources available to the public, such as the NCBI "GeneMap'99" World Wide Web site (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genemap/>), can be employed to determine if previously identified disease genes map within or in proximity to the intervals indicated above.

VII. Analysis of Polynucleotide Expression

Northern analysis is a laboratory technique used to detect the presence of a transcript of a gene and involves the hybridization of a labeled nucleotide sequence to a membrane on which RNAs from a particular cell type or tissue have been bound. (See, e.g., Sambrook, supra, ch. 7; Ausubel (1995)

5 supra, ch. 4 and 16.)

Analogous computer techniques applying BLAST were used to search for identical or related molecules in cDNA databases such as GenBank or LIFESEQ (Incyte Genomics). This analysis is much faster than multiple membrane-based hybridizations. In addition, the sensitivity of the computer search can be modified to determine whether any particular match is categorized as exact or similar.

10 The basis of the search is the product score, which is defined as:

$$\frac{\text{BLAST Score} \times \text{Percent Identity}}{5 \times \text{minimum} \{ \text{length}(\text{Seq. 1}), \text{length}(\text{Seq. 2}) \}}$$

15 The product score takes into account both the degree of similarity between two sequences and the length of the sequence match. The product score is a normalized value between 0 and 100, and is calculated as follows: the BLAST score is multiplied by the percent nucleotide identity and the product is divided by (5 times the length of the shorter of the two sequences). The BLAST score is calculated by assigning a score of +5 for every base that matches in a high-scoring segment pair (HSP), and -4 for
20 every mismatch. Two sequences may share more than one HSP (separated by gaps). If there is more than one HSP, then the pair with the highest BLAST score is used to calculate the product score. The product score represents a balance between fractional overlap and quality in a BLAST alignment. For example, a product score of 100 is produced only for 100% identity over the entire length of the shorter of the two sequences being compared. A product score of 70 is produced either by 100% identity and
25 70% overlap at one end, or by 88% identity and 100% overlap at the other. A product score of 50 is produced either by 100% identity and 50% overlap at one end, or 79% identity and 100% overlap.

Alternatively, polynucleotide sequences encoding APRG are analyzed with respect to the tissue sources from which they were derived. For example, some full length sequences are assembled, at least in part, with overlapping Incyte cDNA sequences (see Example III). Each cDNA sequence is derived
30 from a cDNA library constructed from a human tissue. Each human tissue is classified into one of the following organ/tissue categories: cardiovascular system; connective tissue; digestive system; embryonic structures; endocrine system; exocrine glands; genitalia, female; genitalia, male; germ cells; hemic and immune system; liver; musculoskeletal system; nervous system; pancreas; respiratory system; sense organs; skin; stomatognathic system; unclassified/mixed; or urinary tract. The number of

libraries in each category is counted and divided by the total number of libraries across all categories. Similarly, each human tissue is classified into one of the following disease/condition categories: cancer, cell line, developmental, inflammation, neurological, trauma, cardiovascular, pooled, and other, and the number of libraries in each category is counted and divided by the total number of libraries across all categories. The resulting percentages reflect the tissue- and disease-specific expression of cDNA encoding APRG. cDNA sequences and cDNA library/tissue information are found in the LIFESEQ GOLD database (Incyte Genomics, Palo Alto CA).

VIII. Extension of APRG Encoding Polynucleotides

Full length polynucleotide sequences were also produced by extension of an appropriate fragment of the full length molecule using oligonucleotide primers designed from this fragment. One primer was synthesized to initiate 5' extension of the known fragment, and the other primer was synthesized to initiate 3' extension of the known fragment. The initial primers were designed using OLIGO 4.06 software (National Biosciences), or another appropriate program, to be about 22 to 30 nucleotides in length, to have a GC content of about 50% or more, and to anneal to the target sequence at temperatures of about 68°C to about 72°C. Any stretch of nucleotides which would result in hairpin structures and primer-primer dimerizations was avoided.

Selected human cDNA libraries were used to extend the sequence. If more than one extension was necessary or desired, additional or nested sets of primers were designed.

High fidelity amplification was obtained by PCR using methods well known in the art. PCR was performed in 96-well plates using the PTC-200 thermal cycler (MJ Research, Inc.). The reaction mix contained DNA template, 200 nmol of each primer, reaction buffer containing Mg^{2+} , $(NH_4)_2SO_4$, and 2-mercaptoethanol, Taq DNA polymerase (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech), ELONGASE enzyme (Life Technologies), and Pfu DNA polymerase (Stratagene), with the following parameters for primer pair PCI A and PCI B: Step 1: 94°C, 3 min; Step 2: 94°C, 15 sec; Step 3: 60°C, 1 min; Step 4: 68°C, 2 min; Step 5: Steps 2, 3, and 4 repeated 20 times; Step 6: 68°C, 5 min; Step 7: storage at 4°C. In the alternative, the parameters for primer pair T7 and SK+ were as follows: Step 1: 94°C, 3 min; Step 2: 94°C, 15 sec; Step 3: 57°C, 1 min; Step 4: 68°C, 2 min; Step 5: Steps 2, 3, and 4 repeated 20 times; Step 6: 68°C, 5 min; Step 7: storage at 4°C.

The concentration of DNA in each well was determined by dispensing 100 μ l PICOGREEN quantitation reagent (0.25% (v/v) PICOGREEN; Molecular Probes, Eugene OR) dissolved in 1X TE and 0.5 μ l of undiluted PCR product into each well of an opaque fluorimeter plate (Corning Costar, Acton MA), allowing the DNA to bind to the reagent. The plate was scanned in a Fluoroskan II (Labsystems Oy, Helsinki, Finland) to measure the fluorescence of the sample and to quantify the concentration of DNA. A 5 μ l to 10 μ l aliquot of the reaction mixture was analyzed by electrophoresis

on a 1 % agarose gel to determine which reactions were successful in extending the sequence.

The extended nucleotides were desalted and concentrated, transferred to 384-well plates, digested with CviJI cholera virus endonuclease (Molecular Biology Research, Madison WI), and sonicated or sheared prior to religation into pUC 18 vector (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech). For
5 shotgun sequencing, the digested nucleotides were separated on low concentration (0.6 to 0.8%) agarose gels, fragments were excised, and agar digested with Agar ACE (Promega). Extended clones were religated using T4 ligase (New England Biolabs, Beverly MA) into pUC 18 vector (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech), treated with Pfu DNA polymerase (Stratagene) to fill-in restriction site overhangs, and transfected into competent E. coli cells. Transformed cells were selected on antibiotic-containing
10 media, and individual colonies were picked and cultured overnight at 37°C in 384-well plates in LB/2x carb liquid media.

The cells were lysed, and DNA was amplified by PCR using Taq DNA polymerase (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech) and Pfu DNA polymerase (Stratagene) with the following parameters: Step 1: 94°C, 3 min; Step 2: 94°C, 15 sec; Step 3: 60°C, 1 min; Step 4: 72°C, 2 min; Step 5: steps 2, 3, and 4
15 repeated 29 times; Step 6: 72°C, 5 min; Step 7: storage at 4°C. DNA was quantified by PICOGREEN reagent (Molecular Probes) as described above. Samples with low DNA recoveries were reamplified using the same conditions as described above. Samples were diluted with 20% dimethylsulfoxide (1:2, v/v), and sequenced using DYENAMIC energy transfer sequencing primers and the DYENAMIC DIRECT kit (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech) or the ABI PRISM BIGDYE Terminator cycle
20 sequencing ready reaction kit (Applied Biosystems).

In like manner, full length polynucleotide sequences are verified using the above procedure or are used to obtain 5' regulatory sequences using the above procedure along with oligonucleotides designed for such extension, and an appropriate genomic library.

IX. Labeling and Use of Individual Hybridization Probes

25 Hybridization probes derived from SEQ ID NO:4-6 are employed to screen cDNAs, genomic DNAs, or mRNAs. Although the labeling of oligonucleotides, consisting of about 20 base pairs, is specifically described, essentially the same procedure is used with larger nucleotide fragments. Oligonucleotides are designed using state-of-the-art software such as OLIGO 4.06 software (National Biosciences) and labeled by combining 50 pmol of each oligomer, 250 µCi of [γ -³²P] adenosine
30 triphosphate (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech), and T4 polynucleotide kinase (DuPont NEN, Boston MA). The labeled oligonucleotides are substantially purified using a SEPHADEX G-25 superfine size exclusion dextran bead column (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech). An aliquot containing 10⁷ counts per minute of the labeled probe is used in a typical membrane-based hybridization analysis of human genomic DNA digested with one of the following endonucleases: Ase I, Bgl II, Eco RI, Pst I, Xba I, or

Pvu II (DuPont NEN).

The DNA from each digest is fractionated on a 0.7% agarose gel and transferred to nylon membranes (Nytran Plus, Schleicher & Schuell, Durham NH). Hybridization is carried out for 16 hours at 40°C. To remove nonspecific signals, blots are sequentially washed at room temperature under conditions of up to, for example, 0.1 x saline sodium citrate and 0.5% sodium dodecyl sulfate. Hybridization patterns are visualized using autoradiography or an alternative imaging means and compared.

X. Microarrays

The linkage or synthesis of array elements upon a microarray can be achieved utilizing photolithography, piezoelectric printing (ink-jet printing, See, e.g., Baldeschweiler, *supra.*), mechanical microspotting technologies, and derivatives thereof. The substrate in each of the aforementioned technologies should be uniform and solid with a non-porous surface (Skena (1999), *supra.*). Suggested substrates include silicon, silica, glass slides, glass chips, and silicon wafers. Alternatively, a procedure analogous to a dot or slot blot may also be used to arrange and link elements to the surface of a substrate using thermal, UV, chemical, or mechanical bonding procedures. A typical array may be produced using available methods and machines well known to those of ordinary skill in the art and may contain any appropriate number of elements. (See, e.g., Skena, M. et al. (1995) *Science* 270:467-470; Shalon, D. et al. (1996) *Genome Res.* 6:639-645; Marshall, A. and J. Hodgson (1998) *Nat. Biotechnol.* 16:27-31.)

Full length cDNAs, Expressed Sequence Tags (ESTs), or fragments or oligomers thereof may comprise the elements of the microarray. Fragments or oligomers suitable for hybridization can be selected using software well known in the art such as LASERGENE software (DNASTAR). The array elements are hybridized with polynucleotides in a biological sample. The polynucleotides in the biological sample are conjugated to a fluorescent label or other molecular tag for ease of detection. After hybridization, nonhybridized nucleotides from the biological sample are removed, and a fluorescence scanner is used to detect hybridization at each array element. Alternatively, laser desorption and mass spectrometry may be used for detection of hybridization. The degree of complementarity and the relative abundance of each polynucleotide which hybridizes to an element on the microarray may be assessed. In one embodiment, microarray preparation and usage is described in detail below.

Tissue or Cell Sample Preparation

Total RNA is isolated from tissue samples using the guanidinium thiocyanate method and poly(A)⁺ RNA is purified using the oligo-(dT) cellulose method. Each poly(A)⁺ RNA sample is reverse transcribed using MMLV reverse-transcriptase, 0.05 pg/μl oligo-(dT) primer (21mer), 1X first

strand buffer, 0.03 units/ μ l RNase inhibitor, 500 μ M dATP, 500 μ M dGTP, 500 μ M dTTP, 40 μ M dCTP, 40 μ M dCTP-Cy3 (BDS) or dCTP-Cy5 (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech). The reverse transcription reaction is performed in a 25 ml volume containing 200 ng poly(A)⁺ RNA with GEMBRIGHT kits (Incyte). Specific control poly(A)⁺ RNAs are synthesized by in vitro transcription from non-coding yeast genomic DNA. After incubation at 37° C for 2 hr, each reaction sample (one with Cy3 and another with Cy5 labeling) is treated with 2.5 ml of 0.5M sodium hydroxide and incubated for 20 minutes at 85° C to stop the reaction and degrade the RNA. Samples are purified using two successive CHROMA SPIN 30 gel filtration spin columns (CLONTECH Laboratories, Inc. (CLONTECH), Palo Alto CA) and after combining, both reaction samples are ethanol precipitated using 1 ml of glycogen (1 mg/ml), 60 ml sodium acetate, and 300 ml of 100% ethanol. The sample is then dried to completion using a SpeedVAC (Savant Instruments Inc., Holbrook NY) and resuspended in 14 μ l 5X SSC/0.2% SDS.

Microarray Preparation

Sequences of the present invention are used to generate array elements. Each array element is amplified from bacterial cells containing vectors with cloned cDNA inserts. PCR amplification uses primers complementary to the vector sequences flanking the cDNA insert. Array elements are amplified in thirty cycles of PCR from an initial quantity of 1-2 ng to a final quantity greater than 5 μ g. Amplified array elements are then purified using SEPHACRYL-400 (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech).

Purified array elements are immobilized on polymer-coated glass slides. Glass microscope slides (Corning) are cleaned by ultrasound in 0.1% SDS and acetone, with extensive distilled water washes between and after treatments. Glass slides are etched in 4% hydrofluoric acid (VWR Scientific Products Corporation (VWR), West Chester PA), washed extensively in distilled water, and coated with 0.05% aminopropyl silane (Sigma) in 95% ethanol. Coated slides are cured in a 110° C oven.

Array elements are applied to the coated glass substrate using a procedure described in US Patent No. 5,807,522, incorporated herein by reference. 1 μ l of the array element DNA, at an average concentration of 100 ng/ μ l, is loaded into the open capillary printing element by a high-speed robotic apparatus. The apparatus then deposits about 5 nl of array element sample per slide.

Microarrays are UV-crosslinked using a STRATALINKER UV-crosslinker (Stratagene). Microarrays are washed at room temperature once in 0.2% SDS and three times in distilled water. Non-specific binding sites are blocked by incubation of microarrays in 0.2% casein in phosphate buffered saline (PBS) (Tropix, Inc., Bedford MA) for 30 minutes at 60° C followed by washes in 0.2% SDS and distilled water as before.

Hybridization

Hybridization reactions contain 9 μ l of sample mixture consisting of 0.2 μ g each of Cy3 and Cy5 labeled cDNA synthesis products in 5X SSC, 0.2% SDS hybridization buffer. The sample mixture is heated to 65°C for 5 minutes and is aliquoted onto the microarray surface and covered with an 1.8 cm² coverslip. The arrays are transferred to a waterproof chamber having a cavity just slightly larger than a microscope slide. The chamber is kept at 100% humidity internally by the addition of 140 μ l of 5X SSC in a corner of the chamber. The chamber containing the arrays is incubated for about 6.5 hours at 60°C. The arrays are washed for 10 min at 45°C in a first wash buffer (1X SSC, 0.1% SDS), three times for 10 minutes each at 45°C in a second wash buffer (0.1X SSC), and dried.

Detection

Reporter-labeled hybridization complexes are detected with a microscope equipped with an Innova 70 mixed gas 10 W laser (Coherent, Inc., Santa Clara CA) capable of generating spectral lines at 488 nm for excitation of Cy3 and at 632 nm for excitation of Cy5. The excitation laser light is focused on the array using a 20X microscope objective (Nikon, Inc., Melville NY). The slide containing the array is placed on a computer-controlled X-Y stage on the microscope and raster-scanned past the objective. The 1.8 cm x 1.8 cm array used in the present example is scanned with a resolution of 20 micrometers.

In two separate scans, a mixed gas multiline laser excites the two fluorophores sequentially. Emitted light is split, based on wavelength, into two photomultiplier tube detectors (PMT R1477, Hamamatsu Photonics Systems, Bridgewater NJ) corresponding to the two fluorophores. Appropriate filters positioned between the array and the photomultiplier tubes are used to filter the signals. The emission maxima of the fluorophores used are 565 nm for Cy3 and 650 nm for Cy5. Each array is typically scanned twice, one scan per fluorophore using the appropriate filters at the laser source, although the apparatus is capable of recording the spectra from both fluorophores simultaneously.

The sensitivity of the scans is typically calibrated using the signal intensity generated by a cDNA control species added to the sample mixture at a known concentration. A specific location on the array contains a complementary DNA sequence, allowing the intensity of the signal at that location to be correlated with a weight ratio of hybridizing species of 1:100,000. When two samples from different sources (e.g., representing test and control cells), each labeled with a different fluorophore, are hybridized to a single array for the purpose of identifying genes that are differentially expressed, the calibration is done by labeling samples of the calibrating cDNA with the two fluorophores and adding identical amounts of each to the hybridization mixture.

The output of the photomultiplier tube is digitized using a 12-bit RTI-835H analog-to-digital (A/D) conversion board (Analog Devices, Inc., Norwood MA) installed in an IBM-compatible PC computer. The digitized data are displayed as an image where the signal intensity is mapped using a linear 20-color transformation to a pseudocolor scale ranging from blue (low signal) to red (high

signal). The data is also analyzed quantitatively. Where two different fluorophores are excited and measured simultaneously, the data are first corrected for optical crosstalk (due to overlapping emission spectra) between the fluorophores using each fluorophore's emission spectrum.

A grid is superimposed over the fluorescence signal image such that the signal from each spot is centered in each element of the grid. The fluorescence signal within each element is then integrated to obtain a numerical value corresponding to the average intensity of the signal. The software used for signal analysis is the GEMTOOLS gene expression analysis program (Incyte).

XI. Complementary Polynucleotides

Sequences complementary to the APRG-encoding sequences, or any parts thereof, are used to detect, decrease, or inhibit expression of naturally occurring APRG. Although use of oligonucleotides comprising from about 15 to 30 base pairs is described, essentially the same procedure is used with smaller or with larger sequence fragments. Appropriate oligonucleotides are designed using OLIGO 4.06 software (National Biosciences) and the coding sequence of APRG. To inhibit transcription, a complementary oligonucleotide is designed from the most unique 5' sequence and used to prevent promoter binding to the coding sequence. To inhibit translation, a complementary oligonucleotide is designed to prevent ribosomal binding to the APRG-encoding transcript.

XII. Expression of APRG

Expression and purification of APRG is achieved using bacterial or virus-based expression systems. For expression of APRG in bacteria, cDNA is subcloned into an appropriate vector containing an antibiotic resistance gene and an inducible promoter that directs high levels of cDNA transcription. Examples of such promoters include, but are not limited to, the *trp-lac (tac)* hybrid promoter and the T5 or T7 bacteriophage promoter in conjunction with the *lac* operator regulatory element. Recombinant vectors are transformed into suitable bacterial hosts, e.g., BL21(DE3).

Antibiotic resistant bacteria express APRG upon induction with isopropyl beta-D-

thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG). Expression of APRG in eukaryotic cells is achieved by infecting insect or mammalian cell lines with recombinant Autographica californica nuclear polyhedrosis virus (AcMNPV), commonly known as baculovirus. The nonessential polyhedrin gene of baculovirus is replaced with cDNA encoding APRG by either homologous recombination or bacterial-mediated transposition involving transfer plasmid intermediates. Viral infectivity is maintained and the strong polyhedrin promoter drives high levels of cDNA transcription. Recombinant baculovirus is used to infect Spodoptera frugiperda (Sf9) insect cells in most cases, or human hepatocytes, in some cases. Infection of the latter requires additional genetic modifications to baculovirus. (See Engelhard, E.K. et al. (1994) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 91:3224-3227; Sandig, V. et al. (1996) Hum. Gene Ther. 7:1937-1945.)

In most expression systems, APRG is synthesized as a fusion protein with, e.g., glutathione S-transferase (GST) or a peptide epitope tag, such as FLAG or 6-His, permitting rapid, single-step, affinity-based purification of recombinant fusion protein from crude cell lysates. GST, a 26-kilodalton enzyme from Schistosoma japonicum, enables the purification of fusion proteins on immobilized glutathione under conditions that maintain protein activity and antigenicity (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech). Following purification, the GST moiety can be proteolytically cleaved from APRG at specifically engineered sites. FLAG, an 8-amino acid peptide, enables immunoaffinity purification using commercially available monoclonal and polyclonal anti-FLAG antibodies (Eastman Kodak). 6-His, a stretch of six consecutive histidine residues, enables purification on metal-chelate resins (QIAGEN). Methods for protein expression and purification are discussed in Ausubel (1995, supra, ch. 10 and 16). Purified APRG obtained by these methods can be used directly in the assays shown in Examples XVI and XVII, where applicable.

XIII. Functional Assays

APRG function is assessed by expressing the sequences encoding APRG at physiologically elevated levels in mammalian cell culture systems. cDNA is subcloned into a mammalian expression vector containing a strong promoter that drives high levels of cDNA expression. Vectors of choice include PCMV SPORT (Life Technologies) and PCR3.1 (Invitrogen, Carlsbad CA), both of which contain the cytomegalovirus promoter. 5-10 μ g of recombinant vector are transiently transfected into a human cell line, for example, an endothelial or hematopoietic cell line, using either liposome formulations or electroporation. 1-2 μ g of an additional plasmid containing sequences encoding a marker protein are co-transfected. Expression of a marker protein provides a means to distinguish transfected cells from nontransfected cells and is a reliable predictor of cDNA expression from the recombinant vector. Marker proteins of choice include, e.g., Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP; Clontech), CD64, or a CD64-GFP fusion protein. Flow cytometry (FCM), an automated, laser optics-based technique, is used to identify transfected cells expressing GFP or CD64-GFP and to evaluate the apoptotic state of the cells and other cellular properties. FCM detects and quantifies the uptake of fluorescent molecules that diagnose events preceding or coincident with cell death. These events include changes in nuclear DNA content as measured by staining of DNA with propidium iodide; changes in cell size and granularity as measured by forward light scatter and 90 degree side light scatter; down-regulation of DNA synthesis as measured by decrease in bromodeoxyuridine uptake; alterations in expression of cell surface and intracellular proteins as measured by reactivity with specific antibodies; and alterations in plasma membrane composition as measured by the binding of fluorescein-conjugated Annexin V protein to the cell surface. Methods in flow cytometry are discussed in Ormerod, M.G. (1994) Flow Cytometry, Oxford, New York NY.

The influence of APRG on gene expression can be assessed using highly purified populations of cells transfected with sequences encoding APRG and either CD64 or CD64-GFP. CD64 and CD64-GFP are expressed on the surface of transfected cells and bind to conserved regions of human immunoglobulin G (IgG). Transfected cells are efficiently separated from nontransfected cells using magnetic beads coated with either human IgG or antibody against CD64 (DYNAL, Lake Success NY). mRNA can be purified from the cells using methods well known by those of skill in the art. Expression of mRNA encoding APRG and other genes of interest can be analyzed by northern analysis or microarray techniques.

XIV. Production of APRG Specific Antibodies

APRG substantially purified using polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (PAGE; see, e.g., Harrington, M.G. (1990) *Methods Enzymol.* 182:488-495), or other purification techniques, is used to immunize rabbits and to produce antibodies using standard protocols.

Alternatively, the APRG amino acid sequence is analyzed using LASERGENE software (DNASTAR) to determine regions of high immunogenicity, and a corresponding oligopeptide is synthesized and used to raise antibodies by means known to those of skill in the art. Methods for selection of appropriate epitopes, such as those near the C-terminus or in hydrophilic regions are well described in the art. (See, e.g., Ausubel, 1995, supra, ch. 11.)

Typically, oligopeptides of about 15 residues in length are synthesized using an ABI 431A peptide synthesizer (Applied Biosystems) using Fmoc chemistry and coupled to KLH (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis MO) by reaction with N-maleimidobenzoyl-N-hydroxysuccinimide ester (MBS) to increase immunogenicity. (See, e.g., Ausubel, 1995, supra.) Rabbits are immunized with the oligopeptide-KLH complex in complete Freund's adjuvant. Resulting antisera are tested for antipeptide and anti-APRG activity by, for example, binding the peptide or APRG to a substrate, blocking with 1% BSA, reacting with rabbit antisera, washing, and reacting with radio-iodinated goat anti-rabbit IgG.

XV. Purification of Naturally Occurring APRG Using Specific Antibodies

Naturally occurring or recombinant APRG is substantially purified by immunoaffinity chromatography using antibodies specific for APRG. An immunoaffinity column is constructed by covalently coupling anti-APRG antibody to an activated chromatographic resin, such as CNBr-activated SEPHAROSE (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech). After the coupling, the resin is blocked and washed according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Media containing APRG are passed over the immunoaffinity column, and the column is washed under conditions that allow the preferential absorbance of APRG (e.g., high ionic strength buffers in the presence of detergent). The column is eluted under conditions that disrupt antibody/APRG binding (e.g., a buffer of pH 2 to pH 3, or a high concentration of a chaotrope, such as urea or thiocyanate ion),

and APRG is collected.

XVI. Identification of Molecules Which Interact with APRG

APRG, or biologically active fragments thereof, are labeled with ^{125}I Bolton-Hunter reagent.
5 (See, e.g., Bolton A.E. and W.M. Hunter (1973) *Biochem. J.* 133:529-539.) Candidate molecules previously arrayed in the wells of a multi-well plate are incubated with the labeled APRG, washed, and any wells with labeled APRG complex are assayed. Data obtained using different concentrations of APRG are used to calculate values for the number, affinity, and association of APRG with the candidate molecules.

10 Alternatively, molecules interacting with APRG are analyzed using the yeast two-hybrid system as described in Fields, S. and O. Song (1989) *Nature* 340:245-246, or using commercially available kits based on the two-hybrid system, such as the MATCHMAKER system (Clontech).

APRG may also be used in the PATHCALLING process (CuraGen Corp., New Haven CT) which employs the yeast two-hybrid system in a high-throughput manner to determine all interactions
15 between the proteins encoded by two large libraries of genes (Nandabalan, K. et al. (2000) U.S. Patent No. 6,057,101).

XVII. Demonstration of APRG Activity

An assay for APRG activity measures cell proliferation as the amount of newly initiated DNA synthesis in Swiss mouse 3T3 cells. A plasmid containing polynucleotides encoding APRG is
20 transfected into quiescent 3T3 cultured cells using methods well known in the art. The transiently transfected cells are then incubated in the presence of $[^3\text{H}]$ thymidine, a radioactive DNA precursor. Where applicable, varying amounts of APRG ligand are added to the transfected cells. Incorporation of $[^3\text{H}]$ thymidine into acid-precipitable DNA is measured over an appropriate time interval, and the amount incorporated is directly proportional to the amount of newly synthesized DNA.

25 An alternative assay for APRG activity measures the induction of apoptosis when APRG is expressed at physiologically elevated levels in mammalian cell culture systems. cDNA is subcloned into a mammalian expression vector containing a strong promoter that drives high levels of cDNA

Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP) (Clontech, Palo Alto, CA), CD64, or a CD64-GFP fusion protein. Flow cytometry (FCM), an automated, laser optics-based technique, is used to identify transfected cells expressing GFP or CD64-GFP and to evaluate their apoptotic state. FCM detects and quantifies the uptake of fluorescent molecules that diagnose events preceding or coincident with cell death. These events include changes in nuclear DNA content as measured by staining of DNA with propidium iodide; changes in cell size and granularity as measured by forward light scatter and 90 degree side light scatter; down-regulation of DNA synthesis as measured by decrease in bromodeoxyuridine uptake; alterations in expression of cell surface and intracellular proteins as measured by reactivity with specific antibodies; and alterations in plasma membrane composition as measured by the binding of fluorescein-conjugated Annexin V protein to the cell surface.

Alternatively, APRG activity may be measured by the induction of growth arrest when APRG is expressed at physiologically elevated levels in transformed mammalian cell lines. APRG cDNA is subcloned into a mammalian expression vector containing a strong promoter that drives high levels of cDNA expression, and these constructs are stably transfected into a transformed cell line, such as NIH 3T6 or C6, using methods known in the art. An additional plasmid, containing sequences which encode a selectable marker, such as hygromycin resistance, are co-transfected. Expression of a marker protein provides a means to distinguish transfected cells from nontransfected cells and is a reliable predictor of cDNA expression from the recombinant vector. Cells expressing APRG are compared with control cells, either non-transfected or transfected with vector alone, for characteristics associated with growth arrest. Such characteristics can include, but are not limited to, a reduction in [³H]-thymidine incorporation into newly synthesized DNA, lower doubling and generation times, and decreased culture saturation density.

Alternatively, an assay for APRG activity uses radiolabeled nucleotides, such as [α^{32} P]ATP, to measure either the incorporation of radiolabel into DNA during DNA synthesis, or fragmentation of DNA that accompanies apoptosis. Mammalian cells are transfected with plasmid containing cDNA encoding APRG by methods well known in the art. Cells are then incubated with radiolabeled nucleotide for various lengths of time. Chromosomal DNA is collected, and radioactivity detected using a scintillation counter. Incorporation of radiolabel into chromosomal DNA is proportional to the degree of stimulation of the cell cycle. To determine if APRG promotes apoptosis, chromosomal DNA is collected as above, and analyzed using polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis, by methods well known in the art. Fragmentation of DNA is quantified by comparison to untransfected control cells, and is proportional to the apoptotic activity of APRG.

Various modifications and variations of the described methods and systems of the invention will

be apparent to those skilled in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. Although the invention has been described in connection with certain embodiments, it should be understood that the invention as claimed should not be unduly limited to such specific embodiments. Indeed, various modifications of the described modes for carrying out the invention which are obvious
5 to those skilled in molecular biology or related fields are intended to be within the scope of the following claims.

Table 1

| Incyte Project ID | Polypeptide SEQ ID NO: | Incyte Polypeptide ID | Polynucleotide SEQ ID NO: | Incyte Polynucleotide ID |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3102521 | 1 | 3102521CD1 | 4 | 3102521CB1 |
| 7474984 | 2 | 7474984CD1 | 5 | 7474984CB1 |
| 2458545 | 3 | 2458545CD1 | 6 | 2458545CB1 |

Table 2

| Polypeptide SEQ ID NO: | Incyte Polypeptide ID | GenBank ID NO: | Probability score | GenBank Homolog |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---|
| 1 | 3102521CD1 | g7673638 | 5.10E-70 | [Danio rerio] Dedd1 (death effector domain protein) Inohara, N. and G. Nunez (2000) Genes with homology to mammalian apoptosis regulators identified in zebrafish Cell Death Differ. 7:509-510 |
| 2 | 7474984CD1 | g10198209 | 1.10E-66 | [Homo sapiens] (AF298548) caspase recruitment domain protein 7 |
| 3 | 2458545CD1 | g5776545 | 2.10E-73 | tax1-binding protein TXBP151 [Homo sapiens] |
| | | g11245470 | 1.00E-116 | [fl][Xenopus laevis] nuclear domain- 10 protein NDP52 Korioth, F. et al. (1995) Molecular characterization of NDP52, a novel protein of the nuclear domain 10, which is redistributed upon virus infection and interferon treatment. J. Cell Biol. 130:1-13. |

Table 3

| SEQ ID NO: | Incyte Polypeptide ID | Amino Acid Residues | Potential Phosphorylation Sites | Potential Glycosylation Sites | Signature Sequences, Domains and Motifs | Analytical Methods and Databases |
|------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | 3102521CD1 | 326 | S64 S122 S123 S129 S136 S219 S257 S298 T38 T154 T323 Y258 | | Signal peptide: M1-A56 Death effector domain: L24-V110 FLDED1 (death effector domain protein) PD181655: D243-L312 KE05 protein, FLDED1 (death effector domain protein) PD124668: W12-Q182 Transmembrane domain: Y202-W225 PYRIN domain PD136606: A6-Y98 (P = 1.1e-5) ATP/GTP-binding site motif A (P-loop): G173-T180 | SPScan HMMER-PFAM BLAST-PRODOM |
| 2 | 7474984CD1 | 655 | S18 S207 S217 S268 S316 S448 S463 S468 S491 S521 S525 S527 S554 S566 S585 S603 T177 T282 T291 T36 T377 T634 T640 T649 | N380 N558 N583 | RGD motif, Rgd:R557-D559 Leucine Zipper motif, Leucine_Zipper:L163-L184 L475-L496 L482-L503 GHMP kinases putative ATP-binding protein domain, GHMP_kinases:A146-G172 Zinc finger, C2H2 type zf-C2H2:K654-H679 NDP52 NUCLEAR DOMAIN PROTEIN PD034365:V15-D134 | HMMER BLAST-PRODOM MOTIFS |
| 3 | 2458545CD1 | 691 | T28 S43 S68 S72 T129 S156 S208 T239 S282 S305 T376 S383 S468 T520 T521 T537 S539 S543 S593 S595 S597 S612 T639 T652 S667 S683 T190 S241 T257 | N618 | | MOTIFS HMMER-PFAM HMMER-PFAM BLIMPS-PRODOM |

Table 4

| Polynucleotide SEQ ID NO: | Incyte Polynucleotide ID | Sequence Length | Selected Fragment(s) | Sequence Fragments | 5' Position | 3' Position |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---|---|--|---|
| 4 | 3102521CB1 | 1230 | 1175-1230 | 72070238V1 | 593 | 1230 |
| 5 | 7474984CB1 | 2460 | 1-945, 2400-2460, 1355-2193 | 7018482H1 (KIDNNOC01) GNN.g8099799_000020_006 55084116J2 58005233H1 72482573D1 58005209H1 | 1 747 204 1659 1 1661 | 668 1974 1051 2184 581 2460 |
| 6 | 2458545CB1 | 2986 | 1-40, 2494-2528, 2946-2986, 2183-2225, 959-1210 | 4142481H1 (BRSTTMT01) 1915072H1 (PROSTUT04) 2582205F6 (KIDNTUT13) 1679569T7 (STOMFET01) 1679569F6 (STOMFET01) 3341764F6 (SPLNNOT09) 4833751H1 (BRAVXT03) 3472904F6 (LUNGNOT27) 4333587H1 (KIDCTMT01) 1419213F1 (KIDNNOT09) 2458545F6 (ENDANOT01) 4424620H1 (BRAPDIT01) | 801 1460 900 2304 1749 534 1370 418 504 1552 1 1187 | 1090 1727 1422 2986 2371 1086 1674 726 788 2076 473 1454 |

Table 5

| Polynucleotide SEQ ID NO: | Incyte Project ID | Representative Library |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 4 | 3102521CB1 | ADRETUT05 |
| 6 | 2458545CB1 | BRSTNOT04 |

Table 6

| Library | Vector | Library Description |
|-----------|---------|--|
| ADRETUT05 | pINCY | Library was constructed using RNA isolated from adrenal tumor tissue removed from a 52-year-old Caucasian female during a unilateral adrenalectomy. Pathology indicated a pheochromocytoma. |
| BRSTNOT04 | PSPORT1 | Library was constructed using RNA isolated from breast tissue removed from a 62-year-old East Indian female during a unilateral extended simple mastectomy. Pathology for the associated tumor tissue indicated an invasive grade 3 ductal carcinoma. Patient history included benign hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and hematuria. Family history included cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease, hyperlipidemia, and liver cancer. |

Table 7

| Program | Description | Reference | Parameter Threshold |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| ABI FACTURA | A program that removes vector sequences and masks ambiguous bases in nucleic acid sequences. | Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA. | |
| ABI/PARACEL FDF | A Fast Data Finder useful in comparing and annotating amino acid or nucleic acid sequences. | Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA; Paracel Inc., Pasadena, CA. | Mismatch <50% |
| ABI AutoAssembler | A program that assembles nucleic acid sequences. | Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA. | |
| BLAST | A Basic Local Alignment Search Tool useful in sequence similarity search for amino acid and nucleic acid sequences. BLAST includes five functions: blastp, blastn, blastx, tblastn, and tblastx. | Altschul, S.F. et al. (1990) J. Mol. Biol. 215:403-410; Altschul, S.F. et al. (1997) Nucleic Acids Res. 25:3389-3402. | ESTs: Probability value= 1.0E-8 or less Full Length sequences: Probability value= 1.0E-10 or less |
| FASTA | A Pearson and Lipman algorithm that searches for similarity between a query sequence and a group of sequences of the same type. FASTA comprises at least five functions: fasta, tfasta, fastx, tfastx, and ssearch. | Pearson, W.R. and D.J. Lipman (1988) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 85:2444-2448; Pearson, W.R. (1990) Methods Enzymol. 183:63-98; and Smith, T.F. and M.S. Waterman (1981) Adv. Appl. Math. 2:482-489. | ESTs: fasta E value=1.06E-6 Assembled ESTs: fasta Identity= 95% or greater and Match length=200 bases or greater; fastx E value=1.0E-8 or less Full Length sequences: fastx score=100 or greater |
| BLIMPS | A BLocks IMProved Searcher that matches a sequence against those in BLOCKS, PRINTS, DOMO, PRODOM, and PFAM databases to search for gene families, sequence homology, and structural fingerprint regions. | Henikoff, S. and J.G. Henikoff (1991) Nucleic Acids Res. 19:6565-6572; Henikoff, J.G. and S. Henikoff (1996) Methods Enzymol. 266:88-105; and Attwood, T.K. et al. (1997) J. Chem. Inf. Comput. Sci. 37:417-424. | Probability value= 1.0E-3 or less |
| HMMER | An algorithm for searching a query sequence against hidden Markov model (HMM)-based databases of protein family consensus sequences, such as PFAM. | Krogh, A. et al. (1994) J. Mol. Biol. 235:1501-1531; Sonnhammer, E.L.L. et al. (1988) Nucleic Acids Res. 26:320-322; Durbin, R. et al. (1998) Our World View, in a Nutshell, Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 1-350. | PFAM hits: Probability value= 1.0E-3 or less Signal peptide hits: Score=0 or greater |

Table 7 (cont.)

| Program | Description | Reference | Parameter Threshold |
|-------------|---|--|--|
| ProfileScan | An algorithm that searches for structural and sequence motifs in protein sequences that match sequence patterns defined in Prosite. | Gribskov, M. et al. (1988) CABIOS 4:61-66; Gribskov, M. et al. (1989) Methods Enzymol. 183:146-159; Bairoch, A. et al. (1997) Nucleic Acids Res. 25:217-221. | Normalized quality score \geq GCG-specified "HIGH" value for that particular Prosite motif. Generally, score=1.4-2.1. |
| Phred | A base-calling algorithm that examines automated sequencer traces with high sensitivity and probability. | Ewing, B. et al. (1998) Genome Res. 8:175-185; Ewing, B. and P. Green (1998) Genome Res. 8:186-194. | |
| Phrap | A Phils Revised Assembly Program including SWAT and CrossMatch, programs based on efficient implementation of the Smith-Waterman algorithm, useful in searching sequence homology and assembling DNA sequences. | Smith, T.F. and M.S. Waterman (1981) Adv. Appl. Math. 2:482-489; Smith, T.F. and M.S. Waterman (1981) J. Mol. Biol. 147:195-197; and Green, P., University of Washington, Seattle, WA. | Score= 120 or greater; Match length= 56 or greater |
| Consed | A graphical tool for viewing and editing Phrap assemblies. | Gordon, D. et al. (1998) Genome Res. 8:195-202. | |
| SPScan | A weight matrix analysis program that scans protein sequences for the presence of secretory signal peptides. | Nielson, H. et al. (1997) Protein Engineering 10:1-6; Claverie, J.M. and S. Audic (1997) CABIOS 12:431-439. | Score=3.5 or greater |
| TMAP | A program that uses weight matrices to delineate transmembrane segments on protein sequences and determine orientation. | Persson, B. and P. Argos (1994) J. Mol. Biol. 237:182-192; Persson, B. and P. Argos (1996) Protein Sci. 5:363-371. | |
| TMHMMER | A program that uses a hidden Markov model (HMM) to delineate transmembrane segments on protein sequences and determine orientation. | Sonnhammer, E.L. et al. (1998) Proc. Sixth Intl. Conf. on Intelligent Systems for Mol. Biol., Glasgow et al., eds., The Am. Assoc. for Artificial Intelligence Press, Menlo Park, CA, pp. 175-182. | |
| Motifs | A program that searches amino acid sequences for patterns that matched those defined in Prosite. | Bairoch, A. et al. (1997) Nucleic Acids Res. 25:217-221; Wisconsin Package Program Manual, version 9, page M51-59, Genetics Computer Group, Madison, WI. | |

What is claimed is:

1. An isolated polypeptide selected from the group consisting of:
 - a) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of
5 SEQ ID NO:1-3,
 - b) a naturally occurring polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3,
 - c) a biologically active fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, and
 - 10 d) an immunogenic fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3.
2. An isolated polypeptide of claim 1 selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3.
- 15 3. An isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide of claim 1.
4. An isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide of claim 2.
5. An isolated polynucleotide of claim 4 selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID
20 NO:4-6.
6. A recombinant polynucleotide comprising a promoter sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide of claim 3.
- 25 7. A cell transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide of claim 6.
8. A transgenic organism comprising a recombinant polynucleotide of claim 6.
9. A method for producing a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:
 - 30 a) culturing a cell under conditions suitable for expression of the polypeptide, wherein said cell is transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide, and said recombinant polynucleotide comprises a promoter sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide encoding the polypeptide of claim 1, and
 - b) recovering the polypeptide so expressed.
- 35

10. An isolated antibody which specifically binds to a polypeptide of claim 1.

11. An isolated polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of:

- 5 a) a polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6,
- b) a naturally occurring polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence at least 90% identical to a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:4-6,
- c) a polynucleotide complementary to a polynucleotide of a),
- d) a polynucleotide complementary to a polynucleotide of b), and
- 10 e) an RNA equivalent of a)-d).

12. An isolated polynucleotide comprising at least 60 contiguous nucleotides of a polynucleotide of claim 11.

15 13. A method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 11, the method comprising:

- a) hybridizing the sample with a probe comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides comprising a sequence complementary to said target polynucleotide in the sample, and which probe specifically hybridizes to said target polynucleotide, under conditions whereby a hybridization
- 20 complex is formed between said probe and said target polynucleotide or fragments thereof, and
- b) detecting the presence or absence of said hybridization complex, and, optionally, if present, the amount thereof.

25 14. A method of claim 13, wherein the probe comprises at least 60 contiguous nucleotides.

15. A method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 11, the method comprising:

- a) amplifying said target polynucleotide or fragment thereof using polymerase chain reaction amplification, and
- 30 b) detecting the presence or absence of said amplified target polynucleotide or fragment thereof, and, optionally, if present, the amount thereof.

16. A composition comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

35

17. A composition of claim 16, wherein the polypeptide has an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3.

18. A method for treating a disease or condition associated with decreased expression of functional APRG, comprising administering to a patient in need of such treatment the composition of claim 16.

19. A method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an agonist of a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 to a compound, and
- b) detecting agonist activity in the sample.

20. A composition comprising an agonist compound identified by a method of claim 19 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

21. A method for treating a disease or condition associated with decreased expression of functional APRG, comprising administering to a patient in need of such treatment a composition of claim 20.

22. A method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an antagonist of a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 to a compound, and
- b) detecting antagonist activity in the sample.

23. A composition comprising an antagonist compound identified by a method of claim 22 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

24. A method for treating a disease or condition associated with overexpression of functional APRG, comprising administering to a patient in need of such treatment a composition of claim 23.

25. A method of screening for a compound that specifically binds to the polypeptide of claim 1, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) combining the polypeptide of claim 1 with at least one test compound under suitable conditions, and
- b) detecting binding of the polypeptide of claim 1 to the test compound, thereby identifying a

compound that specifically binds to the polypeptide of claim 1.

26. A method of screening for a compound that modulates the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1, said method comprising:

- 5 a) combining the polypeptide of claim 1 with at least one test compound under conditions permissive for the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1,
- b) assessing the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1 in the presence of the test compound, and
- c) comparing the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1 in the presence of the test compound with the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1 in the absence of the test compound, wherein a change in
- 10 the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1 in the presence of the test compound is indicative of a compound that modulates the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1.

27. A method for screening a compound for effectiveness in altering expression of a target polynucleotide, wherein said target polynucleotide comprises a sequence of claim 5, the method

15 comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising the target polynucleotide to a compound, under conditions suitable for the expression of the target polynucleotide,
- b) detecting altered expression of the target polynucleotide, and
- c) comparing the expression of the target polynucleotide in the presence of varying amounts of
- 20 the compound and in the absence of the compound.

28. A method for assessing toxicity of a test compound, said method comprising:

- a) treating a biological sample containing nucleic acids with the test compound;
- b) hybridizing the nucleic acids of the treated biological sample with a probe comprising at
- 25 least 20 contiguous nucleotides of a polynucleotide of claim 11 under conditions whereby a specific hybridization complex is formed between said probe and a target polynucleotide in the biological sample, said target polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 11 or fragment thereof;
- c) quantifying the amount of hybridization complex; and
- 30 d) comparing the amount of hybridization complex in the treated biological sample with the amount of hybridization complex in an untreated biological sample, wherein a difference in the amount of hybridization complex in the treated biological sample is indicative of toxicity of the test compound.

29. A diagnostic test for a condition or disease associated with the expression of APRG in a biological sample comprising the steps of:

a) combining the biological sample with an antibody of claim 10, under conditions suitable for the antibody to bind the polypeptide and form an antibody:polypeptide complex; and

5 b) detecting the complex, wherein the presence of the complex correlates with the presence of the polypeptide in the biological sample.

30. The antibody of claim 10, wherein the antibody is:

- 10 a) a chimeric antibody,
 b) a single chain antibody,
 c) a Fab fragment,
 d) a F(ab')₂ fragment, or
 e) a humanized antibody.

15 31. A composition comprising an antibody of claim 10 and an acceptable excipient.

32. A method of diagnosing a condition or disease associated with the expression of APRG in a subject, comprising administering to said subject an effective amount of the composition of claim 31.

20

33. A composition of claim 31, wherein the antibody is labeled.

34. A method of diagnosing a condition or disease associated with the expression of APRG in a subject, comprising administering to said subject an effective amount of the composition of claim 33.

25

35. A method of preparing a polyclonal antibody with the specificity of the antibody of claim 10 comprising:

30 a) immunizing an animal with a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, or an immunogenic fragment thereof, under conditions to elicit an antibody response;

 b) isolating antibodies from said animal; and

 c) screening the isolated antibodies with the polypeptide, thereby identifying a polyclonal antibody which binds specifically to a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the

group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3.

36. An antibody produced by a method of claim 35.

5 37. A composition comprising the antibody of claim 36 and a suitable carrier.

38. A method of making a monoclonal antibody with the specificity of the antibody of claim
10 comprising:

- a) immunizing an animal with a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from
10 the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3, or an immunogenic fragment thereof, under conditions to
elicit an antibody response;
- b) isolating antibody producing cells from the animal;
- c) fusing the antibody producing cells with immortalized cells to form monoclonal antibody-
producing hybridoma cells;
- 15 d) culturing the hybridoma cells; and
- e) isolating from the culture monoclonal antibody which binds specifically to a polypeptide
having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3.

39. A monoclonal antibody produced by a method of claim 38.

20

40. A composition comprising the antibody of claim 39 and a suitable carrier.

41. The antibody of claim 10, wherein the antibody is produced by screening a Fab
expression library.

25

42. The antibody of claim 10, wherein the antibody is produced by screening a recombinant
immunoglobulin library.

43. A method for detecting a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the
30 group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3 in a sample, comprising the steps of:

- a) incubating the antibody of claim 10 with a sample under conditions to allow specific
binding of the antibody and the polypeptide; and
- b) detecting specific binding, wherein specific binding indicates the presence of a
polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3 in

the sample.

44. A method of purifying a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3 from a sample, the method comprising:

- 5 a) incubating the antibody of claim 10 with a sample under conditions to allow specific binding of the antibody and the polypeptide; and
- b) separating the antibody from the sample and obtaining the purified polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-3.

10 45. A polypeptide of claim 1, comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

46. A polypeptide of claim 1, comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

47. A polypeptide of claim 1, comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:3.

15 48. A polynucleotide of claim 11, comprising the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:4.

49. A polynucleotide of claim 11, comprising the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:5.

20 50. A polynucleotide of claim 11, comprising the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:6.

<110> INCYTE GENOMICS, INC.
 TANG, Y. Tom
 AZIMZAI, Valda
 YUE, Henry
 BURFORD, Neil
 DING, Li
 ELLIOTT, Vicki S.
 PATTERSON, Chandra
 BAUGHN, Mariah R.

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| Ser | Ser | Ser | Lys | Arg | Thr | Glu | Gly | Ser | Cys | Arg | Arg | Arg | Arg | Gln |
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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Glu | Ala | Asp | Tyr | Glu | Ala | Gly | Arg | Arg | Arg | Leu | Leu | Leu | Met | Glu |
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| | | | | 20 | | | | | 25 | | | | | 30 |
| Tyr | Leu | Arg | Asp | Met | Thr | Leu | Ser | Glu | Gly | Gln | Pro | Pro | Leu | Ala |
| | | | | 35 | | | | | 40 | | | | | 45 |
| Arg | Gly | Glu | Leu | Glu | Gly | Leu | Ile | Pro | Val | Asp | Leu | Ala | Glu | Leu |
| | | | | 50 | | | | | 55 | | | | | 60 |
| Leu | Ile | Ser | Lys | Tyr | Gly | Glu | Lys | Glu | Ala | Val | Lys | Val | Val | Leu |
| | | | | 65 | | | | | 70 | | | | | 75 |
| Lys | Gly | Leu | Lys | Val | Met | Asn | Leu | Leu | Glu | Leu | Val | Asp | Gln | Leu |
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| | | | | 125 | | | | | 130 | | | | | 135 |
| Glu | Ser | Leu | Ala | Cys | Pro | Phe | Pro | Glu | Gln | Glu | Leu | Glu | Ser | Val |
| | | | | 140 | | | | | 145 | | | | | 150 |
| Thr | Val | Glu | Ala | Leu | Phe | Asp | Ser | Gly | Glu | Lys | Pro | Ser | Leu | Ala |
| | | | | 155 | | | | | 160 | | | | | 165 |
| Pro | Ser | Leu | Val | Val | Leu | Gln | Gly | Ser | Ala | Gly | Thr | Gly | Lys | Thr |
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| Pro | Glu | Arg | Leu | Leu | Phe | Ile | Leu | Asp | Gly | Phe | Asp | Glu | Leu | Gln |
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| Glu | Ser | Leu | Leu | His | Leu | Leu | Ile | Arg | Arg | His | Thr | Leu | Pro | Thr |
| | | | | 275 | | | | | 280 | | | | | 285 |
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| | | | | 320 | | | | | 325 | | | | | 330 |
| Glu | Lys | Gln | Ala | Asp | Arg | Ala | Phe | Asp | Ile | Val | Gln | Lys | Asn | Asp |
| | | | | 335 | | | | | 340 | | | | | 345 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
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| Cys | Ser | Trp | Leu | Gln | Gly | Gln | Met | Glu | Arg | Gly | Lys | Val | Val | Leu |
| | | | | 365 | | | | | 370 | | | | | 375 |
| Glu | Thr | Pro | Arg | Asn | Ser | Thr | Asp | Ile | Phe | Met | Ala | Tyr | Val | Ser |
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| Lys | Glu | Asp | Gln | Ser | Arg | Leu | Gly | Lys | Glu | Ser | Arg | Arg | Glu | Val |
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| Phe | Lys | Ile | Lys | His | Ser | Asn | Glu | Lys | Lys | Ser | Gln | Ser | Gln | Asn |
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| Glu Arg Phe Pro | Ala Glu Ser Asp Lys | Asp Ala Leu Glu Asp | His | | |
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C12Q 1/68

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(21) International Application Number: PCT/US01/17581

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IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF,
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*For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guid-
ance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the begin-
ning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.*

(54) Title: REGULATORS OF APOPTOSIS

(57) Abstract: The invention provides human apoptosis regulators (APRG) and polynucleotides which identify and encode APRG. The invention also provides expression vectors, host cells, antibodies, agonists, and antagonists. The invention also provides methods for diagnosing, treating, or preventing disorders associated with aberrant expression of APRG.

WO 01/092527 A3

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.
PCT/US 01/17581

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 7 C12N15/12 C07K14/47 C07K16/18 G01N33/68 G01N33/53
A61K38/17 C12Q1/68

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 C12N C07K G01N A61K C12Q

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category * | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|------------|--|-----------------------|
| A | <p>PARK J R: "CYTOKINE REGULATION OF APOPTOSIS IN HEMATOPOIETIC PRECURSOR CELLS"</p> <p>CURRENT OPINION IN HEMATOLOGY, RAPID SCIENCE PUBLISHERS, PHILADELPHIA, PA, US, vol. 3, no. 3, May 1996 (1996-05), pages 191-196, XP001095101</p> <p>ISSN: 1065-6251</p> <p>the whole document</p> <p style="text-align: center;">--- -/-</p> | |

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

- *A* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- *E* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- *T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- *X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
- *Y* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- *Z* document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

28 October 2002

Date of mailing of the international search report

21/01/2003

Name and mailing address of the ISA

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/US 01/17581

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category * | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|------------|--|--------------------------|
| A | <p>ERL W ET AL: "NUCLEAR FACTOR-KAPPAB REGULATES INDUCTION OF APOPTOSIS AND INHIBITOR OF APOPTOSIS PROTEIN-1 EXPRESSION IN VASCULAR SMOOTH MUSCLE CELLS" CIRCULATION RESEARCH, GRUNE AND STRATTON, BALTIMORE, US, vol. 6, no. 84, 2 April 1999 (1999-04-02), pages 668-677, XP001079701 ISSN: 0009-7330 the whole document</p> | |
| P,X | <p>WO 00 56752 A (HUMAN GENOME SCIENCES INC ;NI JIAN (US); RUBEN STEVEN M (US); YOUN) 28 September 2000 (2000-09-28) see gene 1 and seq.ID.'s 2 and 11</p> | 1,3,4, 6-27, 29-45 |
| P,X | <p>WO 01 04300 A (HELIX RES INST ;ISOGAI TAKAO (JP); KAWAI YURI (JP); MIYOSHI SOUSUK) 18 January 2001 (2001-01-18) the whole document -& EP 1 201 754 A (HELIX RES INST ;FUJISAWA PHARMACEUTICAL CO (JP)) 2 May 2002 (2002-05-02)</p> | 1,3,4, 6-27, 29-45 |
| P,X | <p>WO 01 22920 A (HUMAN GENOME SCIENCES INC ;ROSEN CRAIG A (US); BARASH STEVEN C (US) 5 April 2001 (2001-04-05) see seq.ID's 339 and 4616</p> | 1,3,4, 6-27, 29-45 |

Form PCT/ISA/210 (continuation of second sheet) (July 1992)

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US 01/17581

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☒ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
see FURTHER INFORMATION sheet PCT/ISA/210
2. ☒ Claims Nos.: 20, 23
because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:
see FURTHER INFORMATION sheet PCT/ISA/210
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this International application, as follows:

see additional sheet

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☒ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:
45 and 48 completely; (1-44) partially

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
- ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

Continuation of Box I.1

Although claims 18, 21, and 24 are directed to a method of treatment of the human/animal body, the search has been carried out and based on the alleged effects of the compound/composition.

Although claims 32-34 are directed to a diagnostic method practised on the human/animal body, the search has been carried out and based on the alleged effects of the compound/composition.

Continuation of Box I.2

Claims Nos.: 20, 23

Present claims 20 and 23 relate to products defined by reference to a desirable characteristic or property, namely having (ant)agonistic activity towards the protein(s) of claim 1, and being identified by the methods of claims 19 and 22, respectively.

The application provides no support within the meaning of Article 6 PCT and/or disclosure within the meaning of Article 5 PCT for any such products. In the present case, the claims so lack support, and the application so lacks disclosure, that a meaningful search is impossible. Independent of the above reasoning, the claims also lack clarity (Article 6 PCT). An attempt is made to define the product by reference to a result to be achieved. Again, this lack of clarity in the present case is such as to render a meaningful search impossible. Consequently, the present search report does not extend to said claims.

The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that claims, or parts of claims, relating to inventions in respect of which no international search report has been established need not be the subject of an international preliminary examination (Rule 66.1(e) PCT). The applicant is advised that the EPO policy when acting as an International Preliminary Examining Authority is normally not to carry out a preliminary examination on matter which has not been searched. This is the case irrespective of whether or not the claims are amended following receipt of the search report or during any Chapter II procedure.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

This International Searching Authority found multiple (groups of) inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. Claims: 45 and 48 completely, and 1-44 partially

Polypeptide with 90% sequence identity to seq.ID.1 and fragments thereof, nucleic acid encoding it (e.g. seq.ID.4), expression vector, host, transgenic, method for producing, antibody, methods of detecting the nucleic acid or the polypeptide, composition of the polypeptide or the antibody, method for screening for (ant)agonists, modulators, or binding compounds of the polypeptide, or modulators of the expression of the nucleic acid, method for assessing the toxicity, and method of in vitro diagnosis.

2. Claims: 46 and 49 completely, and 1-44 partially

Polypeptide with 90% sequence identity to seq.ID.2 and fragments thereof, nucleic acid encoding it (e.g. seq.ID.5), expression vector, host, transgenic, method for producing, antibody, methods of detecting the nucleic acid or the polypeptide, composition of the polypeptide or the antibody, method for screening for (ant)agonists, modulators, or binding compounds of the polypeptide, or modulators of the expression of the nucleic acid, method for assessing the toxicity, and method of in vitro diagnosis.

3. Claims: 47 and 50 completely, and 1-44 partially

Polypeptide with 90% sequence identity to seq.ID.3 and fragments thereof, nucleic acid encoding it (e.g. seq.ID.6), expression vector, host, transgenic, method for producing, antibody, methods of detecting the nucleic acid or the polypeptide, composition of the polypeptide or the antibody, method for screening for (ant)agonists, modulators, or binding compounds of the polypeptide, or modulators of the expression of the nucleic acid, method for assessing the toxicity, and method of in vitro diagnosis.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/US 01/17581

| Patent document cited in search report | | Publication date | | Patent family member(s) | | Publication date |
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Form PCT/ISA/210 (patent family annex) (July 1992)

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